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NOVELS

OF

SIR EDWARD BULWER LYTTON

Library Edition

THE CAXTON NOVELS

VOL. I.

THE CAXTONS

A Family Picture

BY

SIR EDWARD BULWER LYTTON, BART.

[2.]

"Every family is a history in itself, and even a poem to those who know how to search its pages."—LAMARTINE.

"Di, probos mores docili juventæ,
Di, senectuti placidæ quietem,
Romulæ genti date remque, prolemque,
Et decus omne."
HORAT. *Carmen Sæculare.*

LIBRARY EDITION—IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

If it be the good fortune of this Work to possess any interest for the Novel reader, that interest, perhaps, will be but little derived from the customary elements of fiction. The plot is extremely slight; the incidents are few, and, with the exception of those which involve the fate of Vivian, such as may be found in the records of ordinary life.

Regarded as a Novel, this attempt is an experiment somewhat apart from the previous works of the Author; it is the first of his writings in which Humour has been employed less for the purpose of satire than in illustration of amiable characters;—it is the first, too, in which man has been viewed less in his active relations with the world, than in his repose at his own hearth:—in a word, the greater part of the canvass has been devoted to the completion of a simple Family Picture. And thus, in any appeal to the sympathies of the human heart, the common household affections occupy the place of those livelier or larger passions which usually (and not unjustly) arrogate the foreground in Romantic composition.

In the Hero whose autobiography connects the different characters and events of the work, it has been the Author's intention to imply the influences of Home upon the conduct and career of youth; and in the am-

bition which estranges PISISTRATUS for a time from the sedentary occupations in which the man of civilised life must usually serve his apprenticeship to Fortune or to Fame, it is not designed to describe the fever of Genius conscious of superior powers and aspiring to high destinies, but the natural tendencies of a fresh and buoyant mind, rather vigorous than contemplative, and in which the desire of action is but the symptom of health.

PISISTRATUS, in this respect (as he himself feels and implies), becomes the specimen or type of a class the numbers of which are daily increasing in the inevitable progress of modern civilisation. He is one too many in the midst of the crowd: he is the representative of the exuberant energies of youth, turning, as with the instinct of nature for space and development, from the Old World to the New. That which may be called the interior meaning of the whole is sought to be completed by the inference that, whatever our wanderings, our happiness will always be found within a narrow compass, and amidst the objects more immediately within our reach; but that we are seldom sensible of this truth (hackneyed though it be in the Schools of all Philosophies) till our researches have spread over a wider area. To insure the blessing of repose, we require a brisker excitement than a few turns up and down our room. Content is like that humour in the crystal, on which Claudian has lavished the wonder of a child and the fancies of a Poet—

"Vivis gemma tumescit aquis."

E. B. L.

THE CAXTONS.

PART FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

"Sir—sir, it is a boy!"

"A boy," said my father, looking up from his book, and evidently much puzzled; "what is a boy?"

Now my father did not mean by that interrogatory to challenge philosophical inquiry, nor to demand of the honest but unenlightened woman who had just rushed into his study, a solution of that mystery, physiological and psychological, which has puzzled so many curious sages, and lies still involved in the question, "What is man?" For, as we need not look further than Dr Johnson's Dictionary to know that a boy is "a male child"—*i. e.*, the male young of man; so he who would go to the depth of things, and know scientifically what is a boy, must be able first to ascertain

"what is a man." But, for aught I know, my father may have been satisfied with Buffon on that score, or he may have sided with Monboddo. He may have agreed with Bishop Berkeley—he may have contented himself with Professor Combe—he may have regarded the genus spiritually, like Zeno, or materially, like Epicurus. Grant that boy is the male young of man, and he would have had plenty of definitions to choose from. He might have said, "Man is a stomach—*ergo*, boy a male young stomach. Man is a brain—boy a male young brain. Man is a bundle of habits—boy a male young bundle of habits. Man is a machine—boy a male young machine. Man is a tail-less monkey—boy a male young tail-less monkey. Man is a combination of gases—boy a male young combination of gases. Man is an appearance—boy a male young appearance," &c. &c., and et cetera, *ad infinitum!* And if none of these definitions had entirely satisfied my father, I am perfectly persuaded that he would never have come to Mrs Primmins for a new one.

But it so happened that my father was at that moment engaged in the important consideration whether the *Iliad* was written by one Homer—or was rather a collection of sundry ballads, done into Greek by divers hands, and finally selected, compiled, and reduced into a whole by a Committee of Taste, under that elegant old tyrant Pisistratus; and the sudden affirmation, "It is a boy!" did not seem to him pertinent to the thread of the discussion. Therefore he asked, "What is a boy?"—vaguely, and, as it were, taken by surprise.

"Lord, sir!" said Mrs Primmins, "what is a boy? Why, the baby!"

"The baby!" repeated my father, rising. "What! you don't mean to say that Mrs Caxton is—eh—?"

"Yes, I do," said Mrs Primmins, dropping a curtsy; "and as fine a little rogue as ever I set eyes upon."

"Poor dear woman!" said my father with great compassion. "So soon, too—so rapidly!" he resumed in a tone of musing surprise. "Why, it is but the other day we were married."

"Bless my heart, sir," said Mrs Primmins, much scandalised, "it is ten months and more."

"Ten months!" said my father, with a sigh. "Ten months! and I have not finished fifty pages of my refutation of Wolfe's monstrous theory! In ten months a child!—and I'll be bound complete—hands, feet, eyes, ears, and nose!—and not like this poor Infant of Mind (and my father pathetically placed his hand on the treatise), of which nothing is formed and shaped—not even the first joint of the little finger! Why, my wife is a precious woman! Well, keep her quiet. Heaven preserve her, and send me strength—to support this blessing!"

"But your honour will look at the baby?—come, sir!" and Mrs Primmins laid hold of my father's sleeve coaxingly.

"Look at it—to be sure," said my father kindly; "look at it, certainly; it is but fair to poor Mrs Caxton; after taking so much trouble, dear soul!"

Therewith my father, drawing his dressing-robe

round him in more stately folds, followed Mrs Primmins up-stairs into a room very carefully darkened.

"How are you, my dear?" said my father with compassionate tenderness, as he groped his way to the bed.

A faint voice muttered, "Better now, and so happy!" And, at the same moment, Mrs Primmins pulled my father away, lifted a coverlid from a small cradle, and, holding a candle within an inch of an undeveloped nose, cried emphatically, "There—bless it!"

"Of course, ma'am, I bless it," said my father, rather peevishly. "It is my duty to bless it; BLESS IT! And this, then, is the way we come into the world!—red, very red,—blushing for all the follies we are destined to commit."

My father sat down on the nurse's chair, the women grouped round him. He continued to gaze on the contents of the cradle, and at length said musingly:—"And Homer was once like this!"

At this moment—and no wonder, considering the propinquity of the candle to his visual organs—Homer's infant likeness commenced the first untutored melodies of nature.

"Homer improved greatly in singing as he grew older," observed Mr Squills, the accoucheur, who was engaged in some mysteries in a corner of the room.

My father stopped his ears:—"Little things can make a great noise," said he philosophically; "and the smaller the thing the greater noise it can make."

So saying, he crept on tiptoe to the bed, and clasp-

ing the pale hand held out to him, whispered some words that no doubt charmed and soothed the ear that heard them, for that pale hand was suddenly drawn from his own and thrown tenderly round his neck. The sound of a gentle kiss was heard through the stillness.

"Mr Caxton, sir," cried Mr Squills, in rebuke, "you agitate my patient—you must retire."

My father raised his mild face, looked round apologetically, brushed his eyes with the back of his hand, stole to the door, and vanished.

"I think," said a kind gossip seated at the other side of my mother's bed—"I think, my dear, that Mr Caxton might have shown more joy,—more natural feeling, I may say,—at the sight of the baby: and SUCH a baby! But all men are just the same, my dear —brutes—all brutes, depend upon it."

"Poor Austin!" sighed my mother feebly—"how little you understand him!"

"And now I shall clear the room," said Mr Squills. "Go to sleep, Mrs Caxton."

"Mr Squills," exclaimed my mother, and the bed-curtains trembled, "pray see that Mr Caxton does not set himself on fire;—and, Mr Squills, tell him not to be vexed and miss me,—I shall be down very soon—shan't I?"

"If you keep yourself easy, you will, ma'am."

"Pray, say so;—and, Primmins,"—

"Yes, ma'am."

"Every one, I fear, is neglecting your master. Be

sure,—(and my mother's lips approached close to Mrs Primmins' ear),—be sure that you—air his nightcap yourself."

"Tender creatures those women," soliloquised Mr Squills, as, after clearing the room of all present, save Mrs Primmins and the nurse, he took his way towards my father's study. Encountering the footman in the passage,—"John," said he, "take supper into your master's room, and make us some punch, will you?—stiffish!"

CHAPTER II.

"Mr Caxton, how on earth did you ever come to marry?" asked Mr Squills, abruptly, with his feet on the hob, while stirring up his punch.

That was a home question, which many men might reasonably resent; but my father scarcely knew what resentment was.

"Squills," said he, turning round from his books, and laying one finger on the surgeon's arm confidentially,—"Squills," said he, "I myself should be glad to know how I came to be married."

Mr Squills was a jovial good-hearted man—stout, fat, and with fine teeth, that made his laugh pleasant to look at as well as to hear. Mr Squills, moreover, was a bit of a philosopher in his way;—studied human nature in curing its diseases; and was accustomed to say, that Mr Caxton was a better book in himself than all he had in his library. Mr Squills laughed and rubbed his hands.

My father resumed thoughtfully, and in the tone of one who moralises:—

"There are three great events in life, sir—birth,

marriage, and death. None know how they are born, few know how they die. But I suspect that many can account for the intermediate phenomenon—I cannot."

"It was not for money,—it must have been for love," observed Mr Squills; "and your young wife is as pretty as she is good."

"Ha!" said my father, "I remember."

"Do you, sir?" exclaimed Squills, highly amused. "How was it?"

My father, as was often the case with him, protracted his reply, and then seemed rather to commune with himself than to answer Mr Squills.

"The kindest, the best of men," he murmured—"*Abyssus Eruditionis:* and to think that he bestowed on me the only fortune he had to leave, instead of to his own flesh and blood, Jack and Kitty. All at least that I could grasp *deficiente manu*, of his Latin, his Greek, his Orientals. What do I not owe to him!"

"To whom?" asked Squills. "Good Lord, what's the man talking about?"

"Yes, sir," said my father, rousing himself, "such was Giles Tibbets, M.A., *Sol Scientiarum*, tutor to the humble scholar you address, and father to poor Kitty. He left me his Elzevirs; he left me also his orphan daughter."

"Oh! as a wife—"

"No, as a ward. So she came to live in my house. I am sure there was no harm in it. But my neighbours said there was, and the widow Weltraum told me the

girl's character would suffer. What could I do?—Oh yes, I recollect all now! I married her, that my old friend's child might have a roof to her head, and come to no harm. You see I was forced to do her that injury; for, after all, poor young creature, it was a sad lot for her. A dull bookworm like me—*cochleæ vitam agens*, Mr Squills—leading the life of a snail. But my shell was all I could offer to my poor friend's orphan."

"Mr Caxton, I honour you," said Squills emphatically, jumping up, and spilling half a tumblerful of scalding punch over my father's legs. "You have a heart, sir; and I understand why your wife loves you. You seem a cold man; but you have tears in your eyes at this moment."

"I daresay I have," said my father, rubbing his shins: "it was boiling!"

"And your son will be a comfort to you both," said Mr Squills, reseating himself, and, in his friendly emotion, wholly abstracted from all consciousness of the suffering he had inflicted. "He will be a dove of peace to your ark."

"I don't doubt it," said my father ruefully; "only those doves, when they are small, are a very noisy sort of birds—*non talium avium cantus somnum reducent.* However, it might have been worse. Leda had twins."

"So had Mrs Barnabas last week," rejoined the accoucheur. "Who knows what may be in store for you yet? Here's a health to Master Caxton, and lots of brothers and sisters to him!"

"Brothers and sisters! I am sure Mrs Caxton will never think of such a thing, sir," said my father almost indignantly. "She's much too good a wife to behave so. Once, in a way, it is all very well; but twice—and as it is, not a paper in its place, nor a pen mended the last three days: I, too, who can only write '*cuspide duriusculâ*'—and the baker coming twice to me for his bill too! The Ilithyiæ are troublesome deities, Mr Squills."

"Who are the Ilithyiæ?" asked the accoucheur.

"You ought to know," answered my father, smiling. "The female dæmons who presided over the Neogilos or New-born. They take the name from Juno. See Homer, book XI. By the by, will my Neogilos be brought up like Hector or Astyanax—*videlicet*, nourished by its mother or by a nurse?"

"Which do you prefer, Mr Caxton?" asked Mr Squills, breaking the sugar in his tumbler. "In this I always deem it my duty to consult the wishes of the gentleman."

"A nurse by all means, then," said my father. "And let her carry him *upo kolpo*, next to her bosom. I know all that has been said about mothers nursing their own infants, Mr Squills; but poor Kitty is so sensitive, that I think a stout healthy peasant woman will be the best for the boy's future nerves, and his mother's nerves, present and future, too. Heigh-ho! —I shall miss the dear woman very much; when will she be up, Mr Squills?"

"Oh, in less than a fortnight!"

"And then the Neogilos shall go to school! *upo kolpo*—the nurse with him, and all will be right again," said my father, with a look of sly mysterious humour, which was peculiar to him.

"School! when he's just born?"

"Can't begin too soon," said my father positively; "that's Helvetius' opinion, and it is mine too."

CHAPTER III.

That I was a very wonderful child, I take for granted; but, nevertheless, it was not of my own knowledge that I came into possession of the circumstances set down in my former chapters. But my father's conduct on the occasion of my birth made a notable impression upon all who witnessed it; and Mr Squills and Mrs Primmins have related the facts to me sufficiently often to make me as well acquainted with them as those worthy witnesses themselves. I fancy I see my father before me, in his dark-grey dressing-gown, and with his odd, half-sly, half-innocent twitch of the mouth, and peculiar puzzling look, from two quiet, abstracted, indolently handsome eyes, at the moment he agreed with Helvetius on the propriety of sending me to school as soon as I was born. Nobody knew exactly what to make of my father—his wife excepted. The people of Abdera sent for Hippocrates to cure the supposed insanity of Democritus, "who at that time," saith Hippocrates drily, "was seriously engaged in philosophy." That same people of Abdera would certainly have found very alarming symptoms of madness in my poor father; for, like Democritus, "he esteemed as nothing

the things, great or small, in which the rest of the world were employed." Accordingly, some set him down as a sage, some as a fool. The neighbouring clergy respected him as a scholar, "breathing libraries;" the ladies despised him as an absent pedant, who had no more gallantry than a stock or a stone. The poor loved him for his charities, but laughed at him as a weak sort of man, easily taken in. Yet the squires and farmers found that, in their own matters of rural business, he had always a fund of curious information to impart; and whoever, young or old, gentle or simple, learned or ignorant, asked his advice, it was given with not more humility than wisdom. In the common affairs of life, he seemed incapable of acting for himself; he left all to my mother; or, if taken unawares, was pretty sure to be the dupe. But in those very affairs—if *another* consulted him—his eye brightened, his brow cleared, the desire of serving made him a new being: cautious, profound, practical. Too lazy or too languid where only his own interests were at stake—touch his benevolence, and all the wheels of the clockwork felt the impetus of the master-spring. No wonder that, to others, the nut of such a character was hard to crack! But, in the eyes of my poor mother, Augustine (familiarly Austin) Caxton was the best and the greatest of human beings; and she ought to have known him well, for she studied him with her whole heart, knew every trick of his face, and, nine times out of ten, divined what he was going to say before he opened his lips. Yet certainly there were

deeps in his nature which the plummet of her tender woman's wit had never sounded; and, certainly, it sometimes happened that, even in his most domestic colloquialisms, my mother was in doubt whether he was the simple straightforward person he was mostly taken for. There was, indeed, a kind of suppressed, subtle irony about him, too unsubstantial to be popularly called humour, but dimly implying some sort of jest, which he kept all to himself; and this was only noticeable when he said something that sounded very grave, or appeared to the grave very silly and irrational.

That I did not go to school—at least to what Mr Squills understood by the word school—quite so soon as intended, I need scarcely observe. In fact, my mother managed so well—my nursery, by means of double doors, was so placed out of hearing—that my father, for the most part, was privileged, if he pleased, to forget my existence. He was once vaguely recalled to it on the occasion of my christening. Now, my father was a shy man, and he particularly hated all ceremonies and public spectacles. He became uneasily aware that a great ceremony, in which he might be called upon to play a prominent part, was at hand. Abstracted as he was, and conveniently deaf at times, he had heard such significant whispers about "taking advantage of the bishop's being in the neighbourhood," and "twelve new jelly-glasses being absolutely wanted," as to assure him that some deadly festivity was in the wind. And when the question of godmother and god-

father was fairly put to him, coupled with the remark that this was a fine opportunity to return the civilities of the neighbourhood, he felt that a strong effort at escape was the only thing left. Accordingly, having, seemingly without listening, heard the day fixed, and seen, as they thought, without observing, the chintz chairs in the best drawing-room uncovered (my dear mother was the tidiest woman in the world), my father suddenly discovered that there was to be a great book-sale, twenty miles off, which would last four days, and attend it he must. My mother sighed ; but she never contradicted my father, even when he was wrong, as he certainly was in this case. She only dropped a timid intimation that she feared "it would look odd, and the world might misconstrue my father's absence—had not she better put off the christening?"

"My dear," answered my father, "it will be *my* duty, by-and-by, to christen the boy—a duty not done in a day. At present, I have no doubt that the bishop will do very well without me. Let the day stand, or, if you put it off, upon my word and honour I believe that the wicked auctioneer will put off the book-sale also. Of one thing I am quite sure, that the sale and the christening will take place at the same time."

There was no getting over this ; but I am certain my dear mother had much less heart than before in uncovering the chintz chairs in the best drawing-room. Five years later this would not have happened. My mother would have kissed my father, and said "Stay," and he would have stayed. But she was then very

young and timid; and he, wild man, not of the woods, but the cloisters, nor yet civilised into the tractabilities of home. In short, the post-chaise was ordered and the carpet-bag packed.

"My love," said my mother, the night before this Hegira, looking up from her work—"my love, there is one thing you have quite forgot to settle—I beg pardon for disturbing you, but it is important!—baby's name; shan't we call him Augustine?"

"Augustine," said my father, dreamily; "why, that name's mine."

"And you would like your boy's to be the same?"

"No," said my father, rousing himself. "Nobody would know which was which. I should catch myself learning the Latin accidence or playing at marbles. I should never know my own identity, and Mrs Primmins would be giving me pap."

My mother smiled; and putting her hand, which was a very pretty one, on my father's shoulder, and looking at him tenderly, she said, "There's no fear of mistaking you for any other, even your son, dearest. Still, if you prefer another name, what shall it be?"

"Samuel," said my father. "Dr Parr's name is Samuel."

"La, my love! Samuel is the ugliest name—"

My father did not hear the exclamation—he was again deep in his books; presently he started up:—"Barnes says Homer is Solomon. Read Omeros backwards, in the Hebrew manner—"

"Yes, my love," interrupted my mother. "But baby's Christian name?"

"Omeros—Soremo—Solemo—Solomo!"

"Solomo! shocking," said my mother.

"Shocking, indeed," echoed my father; "an outrage to common sense." Then, after glancing again over his books, he broke out musingly—"But, after all, it is nonsense to suppose that Homer was not settled till *his* time."

"Whose?" asked my mother mechanically.

My father lifted up his finger.

My mother continued, after a short pause, "Arthur is a pretty name. Then there's William—Henry—Charles—Robert. What shall it be, love?"

"Pisistratus?" said my father (who had hung fire till then), in a tone of contempt—"Pisistratus, indeed!"

"Pisistratus! a very fine name," said my mother joyfully—"Pisistratus Caxton. Thank you, my love: Pisistratus it shall be."

"Do you contradict me? Do you side with Wolfe and Heyne, and that pragmatical fellow Vico? Do you mean to say that the Rhapsodists—"

"No, indeed," interrupted my mother. "My dear, you frighten me."

My father sighed, and threw himself back in his chair. My mother took courage and resumed.

"Pisistratus is a long name too! Still one could call him Sisty."

"Sisty, Viator," muttered my father; "that's trite!"

"No, Sisty by itself—short. Thank you, my dear."

Four days afterwards, on his return from the book-sale, to my father's inexpressible bewilderment, he was informed that "Pisistratus was growing the very image of him."

When at length the good man was made thoroughly aware of the fact, that his son and heir boasted a name so memorable in history as that borne by the enslaver of Athens, and the disputed arranger of Homer—and it was asserted to be a name that he himself had suggested—he was as angry as so mild a man could be. "But it is infamous!" he exclaimed. "Pisistratus christened! Pisistratus! who lived six hundred years before Christ was born. Good heavens, madam! you have made me the father of an Anachronism."

My mother burst into tears. But the evil was irremediable. An anachronism I was, and an anachronism I must continue to the end of the chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

"Of course, sir, you will begin soon to educate your son yourself?" said Mr Squills.

"Of course, sir," said my father, "you have read Martinus Scriblerus?"

"I don't understand you, Mr Caxton."

"Then you have *not* read Martinus Scriblerus, Mr Squills!"

"Consider that I have read it, and what then?"

"Why then, Squills," said my father familiarly, "you would know, that though a scholar is often a fool, he is never a fool so supreme, so superlative, as when he is defacing the first unsullied page of the human history, by entering into it the commonplaces of his own pedantry. A scholar, sir—at least one like me—is of all persons the most unfit to teach young children. A mother, sir—a simple, natural, loving mother—is the infant's true guide to knowledge."

"Egad, Mr Caxton, in spite of Helvetius, whom you quoted the night the boy was born—egad, I believe you are right."

"I am sure of it," said my father; "at least as sure as a poor mortal can be of anything. I agree with

Helvetius, the child should be educated from its birth; but how?—there is the rub: send him to school forthwith! Certainly, he is at school already with the two great teachers, Nature and Love. Observe, that childhood and genius have the same master-organ in common—inquisitiveness. Let childhood have its way, and as it began where genius begins, it may find what genius finds. A certain Greek writer tells us of some man, who, in order to save his bees a troublesome flight to Hymettus, cut their wings, and placed before them the finest flowers he could select. The poor bees made no honey. Now, sir, if I were to teach my boy, I should be cutting his wings, and giving him the flowers he should find himself. Let us leave Nature alone for the present, and Nature's loving proxy, the watchful mother."

Therewith my father pointed to his heir sprawling on the grass, and plucking daisies on the lawn; while the young mother's voice rose merrily, laughing at the child's glee.

"I shall make but a poor bill out of your nursery, I see," said Mr Squills.

Agreeably to these doctrines, strange in so learned a father, I thrived and flourished, and learned to spell, and make pothooks, under the joint care of my mother and Dame Primmins. This last was one of an old race fast dying away—the race of old faithful servants—the race of old tale-telling nurses. She had reared my mother before me: but her affection put out new flowers for the new generation. She was a Devonshire

woman—and Devonshire women, especially those who have passed their youth near the sea-coast, are generally superstitious. She had a wonderful budget of fables. Before I was six years old, I was erudite in that primitive literature, in which the legends of all nations are traced to a common fountain—*Puss in Boots*, *Tom Thumb*, *Fortunio*, *Fortunatus*, *Jack the Giant Killer*,—tales like proverbs, equally familiar, under different versions, to the infant worshippers of Budh and the hardier children of Thor. I may say, without vanity, that in an examination in those venerable classics I could have taken honours!

My dear mother had some little misgivings as to the solid benefit to be derived from such fantastic erudition, and timidly consulted my father thereon.

"My love," answered my father, in that tone of voice which always puzzled even my mother to be sure whether he was in jest or earnest—"in all these fables, certain philosophers could easily discover symbolical significations of the highest morality. I have myself written a treatise to prove that *Puss in Boots* is an allegory upon the progress of the human understanding, having its origin in the mystical schools of the Egyptian priests, and evidently an illustration of the worship rendered at Thebes and Memphis to those feline quadrupeds, of which they make both religious symbols and elaborate mummies."

"My dear Austin," said my mother, opening her blue eyes, "you don't think that Sisty will discover all those fine things in *Puss in Boots!*"

"My dear Kitty," answered my father, "you don't think, when you were good enough to take up with me, that you found in me all the fine things I have learned from books. You knew me only as a harmless creature, who was happy enough to please your fancy. By-and-by you discovered that I was no worse for all the quartos that have transmigrated into ideas within me—ideas that are mysteries even to myself. If Sisty, as you call the child (plague on that unlucky anachronism! which you do well to abbreviate into a dissyllable), if Sisty can't discover all the wisdom of Egypt in *Puss in Boots*, what then? *Puss in Boots* is harmless, and it pleases his fancy. All that wakes curiosity is wisdom, if innocent—all that pleases the fancy now, turns hereafter to love or to knowledge. And so, my dear, go back to the nursery."

But I should wrong thee, O best of fathers! if I suffered the reader to suppose, that because thou didst seem so indifferent to my birth, and so careless as to my early teaching, therefore thou wert, at heart, indifferent to thy troublesome Neogilos. As I grew older, I became more sensibly aware that a father's eye was upon me. I distinctly remember one incident, that seems to me, in looking back, a crisis in my infant life, as the first tangible link between my own heart and that calm great soul.

My father was seated on the lawn before the house, his straw-hat over his eyes (it was summer), and his book on his lap. Suddenly a beautiful delf blue-and-white flower-pot, which had been set on the window-

sill of an upper story, fell to the ground with a crash, and the fragments spluttered up round my father's legs. Sublime in his studies as Archimedes in the siege, he continued to read; *Impavidum ferient ruinæ!*

"Dear, dear!" cried my mother, who was at work in the porch, "my poor flower-pot that I prized so much! Who could have done this? Primmins, Primmins!"

Mrs Primmins popped her head out of the fatal window, nodded to the summons, and came down in a trice, pale and breathless.

"Oh," said my mother, mournfully, "I would rather have lost all the plants in the greenhouse in the great blight last May,—I would rather the best tea-set were broken! The poor geranium I reared myself, and the dear, dear flower-pot which Mr Caxton bought for me my last birthday! That naughty child must have done this!"

Mrs Primmins was dreadfully afraid of my father—why, I know not, except that very talkative social persons are usually afraid of very silent shy ones. She cast a hasty glance at her master, who was beginning to evince signs of attention, and cried promptly, "No, ma'am, it was not the dear boy, bless his flesh, it was I!"

"You? how could you be so careless? and you knew how I prized them both. O Primmins!"

Primmins began to sob.

"Don't tell fibs, nursey," said a small shrill voice; and Master Sisty (coming out of the house as bold as

brass) continued rapidly—"don't scold Primmins, mamma: it was I who pushed out the flower-pot."

"Hush!" said nurse, more frightened than ever, and looking aghast towards my father, who had very deliberately taken off his hat, and was regarding the scene with serious eyes wide awake.

"Hush! And if he did break it, ma'am, it was quite an accident; he was standing so, and he never meant it. Did you, master Sisty? Speak! (this in a whisper) or Pa will be so angry."

"Well," said my mother, "I suppose it was an accident; take care in future, my child. You are sorry, I see, to have grieved me. There's a kiss; don't fret."

"No, mamma, you must not kiss me; I don't deserve it. I pushed out the flower-pot on purpose."

"Ha! and why?" said my father, walking up.

Mrs Primmins trembled like a leaf.

"For fun!" said I, hanging my head—"just to see how you'd look, papa; and that's the truth of it. Now beat me, do beat me!"

My father threw his book fifty yards off, stooped down, and caught me to his breast. "Boy," he said, "you have done wrong: you shall repair it by remembering all your life that your father blessed God for giving him a son who spoke truth in spite of fear! Oh! Mrs Primmins, the next fable of this kind you try to teach him, and we part for ever!"

From that time I first date the hour when I felt that I loved my father, and knew that he loved me;

from that time, too, he began to *converse* with me. He would no longer, if he met me in the garden, pass by with a smile and nod; he would stop, put his book in his pocket, and though his talk was often above my comprehension, still somehow I felt happier and better, and less of an infant, when I thought over it, and tried to puzzle out the meaning; for he had a way of suggesting, not teaching—putting things into my head, and then leaving them to work out their own problems. I remember a special instance with respect to that same flower-pot and geranium. Mr Squills, who was a bachelor, and well to do in the world, often made me little presents. Not long after the event I have narrated, he gave me one far exceeding in value those usually bestowed on children,—it was a beautiful large domino-box in cut ivory, painted and gilt. This domino-box was my delight. I was never weary of playing at dominoes with Mrs Primmins, and I slept with the box under my pillow.

"Ah!" said my father one day, when he found me ranging the ivory parallelograms in the parlour, "ah! you like that better than all your playthings, eh?"

"O yes, papa."

"You would be very sorry if your mamma were to throw that box out of the window, and break it for fun." I looked beseechingly at my father, and made no answer.

"But perhaps you would be very glad," he resumed, "if suddenly one of those good fairies you read of could change the domino-box into a beautiful geranium in a

beautiful blue-and-white flower-pot, and you could have the pleasure of putting it on your mamma's window-sill."

"Indeed I would!" said I, half-crying.

"My dear boy, I believe you; but good wishes don't mend bad actions—good actions mend bad actions."

So saying, he shut the door and went out. I cannot tell you how puzzled I was to make out what my father meant by his aphorism. But I know that I played at dominos no more that day. The next morning my father found me seated by myself under a tree in the garden; he paused and looked at me with his grave bright eyes very steadily.

"My boy," said he, "I am going to walk to —— (a town about two miles off), will you come? and, by the by, fetch your domino-box: I should like to show it to a person there." I ran in for the box, and, not a little proud of walking with my father upon the high-road, we set out.

"Papa," said I by the way, "there are no fairies now."

"What then, my child?"

"Why—how then can my domino-box be changed into a geranium and a blue-and-white flower-pot?"

"My dear," said my father, leaning his hand on my shoulder, "everybody who is in earnest to be good, carries two fairies about with him—one here," and he touched my heart; "and one here," and he touched my forehead.

"I don't understand, papa."

"I can wait till you do, Pisistratus! What a name!"

My father stopped at a nursery gardener's, and, after looking over the flowers, paused before a large double geranium. "Ah, this is finer than that which your mamma was so fond of. What is the cost, sir?"

"Only 7s. 6d.," said the gardener.

My father buttoned up his pocket. "I can't afford it to-day," said he gently, and we walked out.

On entering the town, we stopped again at a china-warehouse. "Have you a flower-pot like that I bought some months ago? Ah, here is one, marked 3s. 6d. Yes, that is the price. Well, when your mamma's birth-day comes again, we must buy her another. That is some months to wait. And we can wait, Master Sisty. For truth, that blooms all the year round, is better than a poor geranium; and a word that is never broken, is better than a piece of delf."

My head, which had drooped before, rose again; but the rush of joy at my heart almost stifled me.

"I have called to pay your little bill," said my father, entering the shop of one of those fancy stationers common in country towns, and who sell all kinds of pretty toys and nick-nacks. "And by the way," he added, as the smiling shopman looked over his books for the entry, "I think my little boy here can show you a much handsomer specimen of French workmanship than that work-box which you enticed Mrs Caxton into raffling for, last winter. Show your domino-box, my dear."

I produced my treasure, and the shopman was liberal in his commendations. "It is always well, my boy, to

know what a thing is worth, in case one wishes to part with it. If my young gentleman gets tired of his plaything, what will you give him for it?"

"Why, sir," said the shopman, "I fear we could not afford to give more than eighteen shillings for it, unless the young gentleman took some of these pretty things in exchange!"

"Eighteen shillings!" said my father; "you would give *that* sum. Well, my boy, whenever you do grow tired of your box, you have my leave to sell it."

My father paid his bill and went out. I lingered behind a few moments, and joined him at the end of the street.

"Papa, papa!" I cried, clapping my hands, "we can buy the geranium—we can buy the flower-pot." And I pulled a handful of silver from my pockets.

"Did I not say right?" said my father, passing his handkerchief over his eyes—"You have found the two fairies!"

Oh! how proud, how overjoyed I was, when, after placing vase and flower on the window-sill, I plucked my mother by the gown, and made her follow me to the spot.

"It is his doing, and his money!" said my father; "good actions have mended the bad."

"What!" cried my mother, when she had learned all; "and your poor domino-box that you were so fond of! We will go back to-morrow, and buy it back, if it costs us double."

"Shall we buy it back, Pisistratus?" asked my father.

"Oh no—no—no! It would spoil all," I cried, burying my face on my father's breast.

"My wife," said my father, solemnly, "this is my first lesson to our child—the sanctity and the happiness of self-sacrifice—undo not what it should teach to his dying day."

CHAPTER V.

When I was between my seventh and my eighth year, a change came over me, which may perhaps be familiar to the notice of those parents who boast the anxious blessing of an only child. The ordinary vivacity of childhood forsook me; I became quiet, sedate, and thoughtful. The absence of playfellows of my own age, the companionship of mature minds, alternated only by complete solitude, gave something precocious, whether to my imagination or my reason. The wild fables muttered to me by the old nurse in the summer twilight, or over the winter's hearth—the effort made by my struggling intellect to comprehend the grave, sweet wisdom of my father's suggested lessons—tended to feed a passion for reverie, in which all my faculties strained and struggled, as in the dreams that come when sleep is nearest waking. I had learned to read with ease, and to write with some fluency, and I already began to imitate, to reproduce. Strange tales, akin to those I had gleaned from fairyland—rude songs, modelled from such verse-books as fell into my hands, began to mar the contents of marble-covered pages, designed for the less ambitious purposes of round text

and multiplication. My mind was yet more disturbed by the intensity of my home affections. My love for both my parents had in it something morbid and painful. I often wept to think how little I could do for those I loved so well. My fondest fancies built up imaginary difficulties for them, which my arm was to smooth. These feelings, thus cherished, made my nerves over-susceptible and acute. Nature began to affect me powerfully; and from that affection rose a restless curiosity to analyse the charms that so mysteriously moved me to joy or awe, to smiles or tears. I got my father to explain to me the elements of astronomy; I extracted from Squills, who was an ardent botanist, some of the mysteries in the life of flowers. But music became my darling passion. My mother (though the daughter of a great scholar—a scholar at whose name my father raised his hat if it happened to be on his head) possessed, I must own it fairly, less book-learning than many an humble tradesman's daughter can boast in this more enlightened generation; but she had some natural gifts which had ripened, Heaven knows how! into womanly accomplishments. She drew with some elegance, and painted flowers to exquisite perfection. She played on more than one instrument with more than boarding-school skill; and though she sang in no language but her own, few could hear her sweet voice without being deeply touched. Her music, her songs, had a wondrous effect on me. Thus, altogether, a kind of dreamy yet delightful melancholy seized upon my whole being;

and this was the more remarkable, because contrary to my early temperament, which was bold, active, and hilarious. The change in my character began to act upon my form. From a robust and vigorous infant, I grew into a pale and slender boy. I began to ail and mope. Mr Squills was called in.

"Tonics!" said Mr Squills; "and don't let him sit over his book. Send him out in the air—make him play. Come here, my boy—these organs are growing too large;" and Mr Squills, who was a phrenologist, placed his hand on my forehead. "Gad, sir, here's an ideality for you; and, bless my soul, what a constructiveness!"

My father pushed aside his papers, and walked to and fro the room with his hands behind him; but he did not say a word till Mr Squills was gone.

"My dear," then said he to my mother, on whose breast I was leaning my aching ideality—"my dear, Pisistratus must go to school in good earnest."

"Bless me, Austin!—at his age?"

"He is nearly eight years old."

"But he is so forward."

"It is for that reason he must go to school."

"I don't quite understand you, my love. I know he is getting past me; but you who are so clever——"

My father took my mother's hand—"We can teach him nothing now, Kitty. We send him to school to be taught——"

"By some schoolmaster who knows much less than you do——"

"By little schoolboys, who will make him a boy again," said my father, almost sadly. "My dear, you remember that, when our Kentish gardener planted those filbert-trees, and when they were in their third year, and you began to calculate on what they would bring in, you went out one morning, and found he had cut them down to the ground. You were vexed, and asked why. What did the gardener say? 'To prevent their bearing too soon.' There is no want of fruitfulness here—put back the hour of produce, that the plant may last."

"Let me go to school," said I, lifting my languid head, and smiling on my father. I understood him at once, and it was as if the voice of my life itself answered him.

CHAPTER VI.

A YEAR after the resolution thus come to, I was at home for the holidays.

"I hope," said my mother, "that they are doing Sisty justice. I do think he is not nearly so quick a child as he was before he went to school. I wish you would examine him, Austin."

"I have examined him, my dear. It is just as I expected; and I am quite satisfied."

"What! you really think he has come on?" said my mother, joyfully.

"He does not care a button for botany now," said Mr Squills.

"And he used to be so fond of music, dear boy!" observed my mother, with a sigh. "Good gracious! what noise is that?"

"Your son's pop-gun against the window," said my father. "It is lucky it is only the window; it would have made a less deafening noise, though, if it had been Mr Squills' head, as it was yesterday morning."

"The left ear," observed Squills; "and a very sharp blow it was, too. Yet you are satisfied, Mr Caxton?"

"Yes; I think the boy is now as great a blockhead as most boys of his age are," observed my father with great complacency.

"Dear me, Austin—a great blockhead?"

"What else did he go to school for?" asked my father. And observing a certain dismay in the face of his female audience, and a certain surprise in that of his male, he rose and stood on the hearth, with one hand in his waistcoat, as was his wont when about to philosophise in more detail than was usual to him.

"Mr Squills," said he, "you have had great experience in families."

"As good a practice as any in the county," said Mr Squills proudly: "more than I can manage. I shall advertise for a partner."

"And," resumed my father, "you must have observed almost invariably that, in every family, there is what father, mother, uncle, and aunt, pronounce to be one wonderful child."

"One at least," said Mr Squills, smiling.

"It is easy," continued my father, "to say this is parental partiality,—but it is not so. Examine that child as a stranger, and it will startle yourself. You stand amazed at its eager curiosity—its quick comprehension—its ready wit—its delicate perception. Often, too, you will find some faculty strikingly developed; the child will have a turn for mechanics, perhaps, and make you a model of a steam-boat—or it will have an ear tuned to verse, and will write you a poem like that

it has got by heart from 'The Speaker'—or it will take to botany (like Pisistratus), with the old maid its aunt —or it will play a march on its sister's pianoforte. In short, even you, Squills, will declare that it is really a wonderful child."

"Upon my word," said Mr Squills, thoughtfully, "there's a great deal of truth in what you say. Little Tom Dobbs *is* a wonderful child—so is Frank Stepington—and as for Johnny Styles, I must bring him here for you to hear him prattle on Natural History, and see how well he handles his pretty little microscope."

"Heaven forbid!" said my father. "And now let me proceed. These *thaumata*, or wonders, last till when, Mr Squills?—last till the boy goes to school, and then, somehow or other, the *thaumata* vanish into thin air, like ghosts at the cockcrow. A year after the prodigy has been at the academy, father and mother, uncle and aunt, plague you no more with his doings and sayings: the extraordinary infant has become a very ordinary little boy. Is it not so, Mr Squills?"

"Indeed you are right, sir. How did you come to be so observant? you never seem to——"

"Hush!" interrupted my father; and then, looking fondly at my mother's anxious face, he said soothingly,—"Be comforted: this is wisely ordained—and it is for the best."

"It must be the fault of the school," said my mother, shaking her head.

"It is the necessity of the school and its virtue, my

Kate. Let any one of these wonderful children—wonderful as you thought Sisty himself—stay at home, and you will see its head grow bigger and bigger, and its body thinner and thinner—eh, Mr Squills?—till the mind take all nourishment from the frame, and the frame, in turn, stint or make sickly the mind. You see that noble oak from the window. If the Chinese had brought it up, it would have been a tree in miniature at five years old, and at a hundred, you would have set it in a flower-pot on your table, no bigger than it was at five—a curiosity for its maturity at one age—a show for its diminutiveness at the other. No! the ordeal for talent is school; restore the stunted mannikin to the growing child, and then let the child, if it can, healthily, hardily, naturally, work its slow way up into greatness. If greatness be denied it, it will at least be a man, and that is better than to be a little Johnny Styles, all its life—an oak in a pill-box."

At that moment I rushed into the room, glowing and panting health on my cheek—vigour in my limbs—all childhood at my heart. "Oh, mamma, I have got up the kite—so high! come and see. Do come, papa."

"Certainly," said my father; "only don't cry so loud—kites make no noise in rising; yet, you see how they soar above the world. Come, Kate. Where is my hat? Ah—thank you, my boy."

"Kitty," said my father, looking at the kite, which, attached by its string to the peg I had stuck into the

ground, rested calm in the sky, "never fear but what our kite shall fly as high; only, the human soul has stronger instincts to mount upward than a few sheets of paper on a framework of lath. But, observe, that to prevent its being lost in the freedom of space, we must attach it lightly to earth; and observe again, my dear, that the higher it soars, the more string we must give it."

PART SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

When I had reached the age of twelve, I had got to the head of the preparatory school to which I had been sent. And having thus exhausted all the oxygen of learning in that little receiver, my parents looked out for a wider range for my inspirations. During the last two years in which I had been at school, my love for study had returned; but it was a vigorous, wakeful, undreamy love, stimulated by competition, and animated by the practical desire to excel.

My father no longer sought to curb my intellectual aspirings. He had too great a reverence for scholarship not to wish me to become a scholar if possible; though he more than once said to me somewhat sadly, "Master books, but do not let them master you. Read to live, not live to read. One slave of the lamp is enough for a household: my servitude must not be a hereditary bondage."

My father looked round for a suitable academy; and

the fame of Dr Herman's "Philhellenic Institute" came to his ears.

Now, this Dr Herman was the son of a German music-master, who had settled in England. He had completed his own education at the University of Bonn; but finding learning too common a drug in that market to bring the high price at which he valued his own, and having some theories as to political freedom which attached him to England, he resolved upon setting up a school, which he designed as an "Era in the History of the Human Mind." Dr Herman was one of the earliest of those new-fashioned authorities in education, who have, more lately, spread pretty numerously amongst us, and would have given, perhaps, a dangerous shake to the foundations of our great classical seminaries, if those last had not very wisely, though very cautiously, borrowed some of the more sensible principles which lay mixed and adulterated amongst the crotchets and chimeras of their innovating rivals and assailants.

Dr Herman had written a great many learned works against every pre-existing method of instruction: that which had made the greatest noise was upon the infamous fiction of SPELLING-BOOKS: "A more lying, roundabout, puzzle-headed delusion than that by which we CONFUSE the clear instincts of truth in our accursed system of spelling, was never concocted by the father of falsehood." Such was the exordium of this famous treatise. "For instance, take the monosyllable CAT. What a brazen forehead you must have, when you say

to an infant, C, A, T,—spell CAT: that is, three sounds forming a totally opposite compound — opposite in every detail, opposite in the whole—compose a poor little monosyllable, which, if you would but say the simple truth, the child will learn to spell merely by looking at it! How can three sounds, which run thus to the ear, *see—eh—tee,* compose the sound *cat?* Don't they rather compose the sound *see-eh-tē* or *ceaty?* How can a system of education flourish that begins by so monstrous a falsehood, which the sense of hearing suffices to contradict? No wonder that the horn-book is the despair of mothers!" From this instance the reader will perceive that Dr Herman, in his theory of education, began at the beginning!—he took the bull fairly by the horns. As for the rest, upon a broad principle of eclecticism, he had combined together every new patent invention for youthful idea-shooting. He had taken his trigger from Hofwyl; he had bought his wadding from Hamilton; he had got his copper-caps from Bell and Lancaster. The youthful idea! he had rammed it tight!—he had rammed it loose!—he had rammed it with pictorial illustrations!—he had rammed it with the monitorial system!—he had rammed it in every conceivable way, and with every imaginable ramrod; but I have mournful doubts whether he shot the youthful idea an inch farther than it did under the old mechanism of flint and steel! Nevertheless, as Dr Herman really did teach a great many things too much neglected at schools; as, besides Latin and Greek, he taught a vast variety in that

vague infinite nowadays called "useful knowledge;" as he engaged lecturers on chemistry, engineering, and natural history; as arithmetic and the elements of physical science were enforced with zeal and care; as all sorts of gymnastics were intermingled with the sports of the play-ground;—so the youthful idea, if it did not go farther, spread its shots in a wider direction; and a boy could not stay there five years without learning *something*, which is more than can be said of all schools! He learned at least to use his eyes, and his ears, and his limbs; order, cleanliness, exercise, grew into habits; and the school pleased the ladies and satisfied the gentlemen; in a word, it thrived: and Dr Herman, at the time I speak of, numbered more than one hundred pupils. Now, when the worthy man first commenced the task of tuition, he had proclaimed the humanest abhorrence to the barbarous system of corporeal punishment. But, alas! as his school increased in numbers, he had proportionately recanted these honourable and anti-birchen ideas. He had, reluctantly, perhaps—honestly, no doubt, but with full determination—come to the conclusion that there are secret springs which can only be detected by the twigs of the divining-rod; and having discovered with what comparative ease the whole mechanism of his little government could be carried on by the admission of the birch-regulator, so, as he grew richer, and lazier, and fatter, the Philhellenic Institute spun along as glibly as a top kept in vivacious movement by the perpetual application of the lash.

I believe that the school did not suffer in reputation from this sad apostasy on the part of the head-master; on the contrary, it seemed more natural and English—less outlandish and heretical. And it was at the zenith of its renown, when, one bright morning, with all my clothes nicely mended, and a large plum-cake in my box, I was deposited at its hospitable gates.

Amongst Dr Herman's various whimsicalities, there was one to which he had adhered with more fidelity than to the anti-corporeal punishment articles of his creed; and, in fact, it was upon this that he had caused those imposing words, "Philhellenic Institute," to blaze in gilt capitals in front of his academy. He belonged to that illustrious class of scholars who are now waging war on our popular mythologies, and upsetting all the associations which the Etonians and Harrovians connect with the household names of ancient history. In a word, he sought to restore to scholastic purity the mutilated orthography of Greek appellatives. He was extremely indignant that little boys should be brought up to confound Zeus with Jupiter, Ares with Mars, Artemis with Diana—the Greek deities with the Roman; and so rigidly did he inculcate the doctrine that these two sets of personages were to be kept constantly contradistinguished from each other, that his cross-examinations kept us in eternal confusion.

"Vat," he would exclaim, to some new boy fresh from some grammar-school on the Etonian system—"Vat do you mean by dranslating *Zeus* Jupiter? Is

dat amatory, irascible, cloud-compelling god of Olympus, vid his eagle and his ægis, in the smallest degree resembling de grave, formal, moral Jupiter Optimus Maximus of the Roman Capitol?—a god, Master Simpkins, who would have been perfectly shocked at the idea of running after innocent Fräulein dressed up as a swan or a bull! I put dat question to you vonce for all, Master Simpkins." Master Simpkins took care to agree with the Doctor. "And how could you," resumed Dr Herman majestically, turning to some other criminal alumnus—"how could you presume to dranslate de *Ares* of Homer, sir, by the audacious vulgarism Mars? *Ares*, Master Jones, who roared as loud as ten thousand men when he was hurt; or as you vil roar if I catch you calling him Mars again! *Ares*, who covered seven plectra of ground; confound *Ares*, the man-slayer, with the Mars or Mavors whom de Romans stole from de Sabines! Mars, de solemn and calm protector of Rome! Master Jones, Master Jones, you ought to be ashamed of yourself!" And then waxing enthusiastic, and warming more and more into German gutturals and pronunciation, the good Doctor would lift up his hands, with two great rings on his thumbs, and exclaim—"Und Du! and dou, *Aphroditè;* dou, whose bert de seasons velcomed! dou, who didst put Atonis into a coffer, and den tid durn him into an anemone; dou to be called *Venus* by dat snivel-nosed little Master Budderfield! Venus, who presided over Baumgartens and funerals, and nasty tinking sewers! Venus Cloacina—O mein Gott! Come here, Master

Budderfield; I must flog you for dat; I must indeed, liddle boy!" As our Philhellenic preceptor carried his archæological purism into all Greek proper names, it was not likely that my unhappy baptismal would escape. The first time I signed my exercise I wrote "Pisistratus Caxton" in my best round-hand. "And dey call your baba a scholar!" said the Doctor contemptuously. "Your name, sir, is Greek; and, as Greek, you vill be dood enough to write it, vith vat you call an *e* and an *o*—P, E, I, S, I, S, T, R, A, T, O, S. Vat can you expect for to come to, Master Caxton, if you don't pay de care dat is proper to your own dood name—de *e*, and de *o*? Ach! let me see no more of your vile corruptions! Mein Gott! Pi! ven de name is Pei!"

The next time I wrote home to my father, modestly implying that I was short of cash, that a trap-bat would be acceptable, and that the favourite goddess amongst the boys (whether Greek or Roman was very immaterial) was *Diva Moneta*, I felt a glow of classical pride in signing myself "your affectionate Peisistratos." The next post brought a sad damper to my scholastic exultation. The letter ran thus:—

"My Dear Son,—I prefer my old acquaintances Thucydides and Pisistratus to Thoukudides and Peisistratos. Horace is familiar to me, but Horatius is only known to me as Cocles. Pisistratus can play at trap-ball; but I find no authority in pure Greek to allow me to suppose that that game was known to Peisis-

tratos. I should be too happy to send you a drachma or so, but I have no coins in my possession current at Athens at the time when Pisistratus was spelt Peisistratos.

"Your affectionate father,

"A. Caxton."

Verily, here indeed was the first practical embarrassment produced by that melancholy anachronism which my father had so prophetically deplored. However, nothing like experience to prove the value of compromise in this world! Peisistratos continued to write exercises, and a second letter from Pisistratus was followed by the trap-bat.

CHAPTER II.

I WAS somewhere about sixteen, when, on going home for the holidays, I found my mother's brother settled among the household *Lares*. Uncle Jack, as he was familiarly called, was a light-hearted, plausible, enthusiastic, talkative fellow, who had spent three small fortunes in trying to make a large one.

Uncle Jack was a great speculator; but in all his speculations he never affected to think of himself,—it was always the good of his fellow-creatures that he had at heart, and in this ungrateful world fellow-creatures are not to be relied upon! On coming of age, he inherited £6000 from his maternal grandfather. It seemed to him then that his fellow-creatures were sadly imposed upon by their tailors. Those ninth parts of humanity notoriously eked out their fractional existence by asking nine times too much for the clothing which civilisation, and perhaps a change of climate, render more necessary to us than to our predecessors, the Picts. Out of pure philanthropy, Uncle Jack started a "*Grand National Benevolent Clothing Company*," which undertook to supply the public with inexpressibles of the best Saxon cloth at 7s. 6d. a-pair;

coats, superfine, £1, 18s.! and waistcoats at so much per dozen. They were all to be worked off by steam. Thus the rascally tailors were to be put down, humanity clad, and the philanthropists rewarded (but that was a secondary consideration) with a clear return of thirty per cent. In spite of the evident charitableness of this Christian design, and the irrefragable calculations upon which it was based, this company died a victim to the ignorance and unthankfulness of our fellow-creatures. And all that remained of Jack's £6000 was a fifty-fourth share in a small steam-engine, a large assortment of ready-made pantaloons, and the liabilities of the directors.

Uncle Jack disappeared, and went on his travels. The same spirit of philanthropy which characterised the speculations of his purse attended the risks of his person. Uncle Jack had a natural leaning towards all distressed communities: if any tribe, race, or nation was down in the world, Uncle Jack threw himself plump into the scale to redress the balance. Poles, Greeks (the last were then fighting the Turks), Mexicans, Spaniards—Uncle Jack thrust his nose into all their squabbles!—Heaven forbid I should mock thee, poor Uncle Jack! for those generous predilections towards the unfortunate; only, whenever a nation is in a misfortune, there is always a job going on! The Polish cause, the Greek cause, the Mexican cause, and the Spanish cause, are necessarily mixed up with loans and subscriptions. These Continental patriots, when they take up the sword with one hand, generally con-

trive to thrust the other hand deep into their neighbours' breeches pockets. Uncle Jack went to Greece, thence he went to Spain, thence to Mexico. No doubt he was of great service to those afflicted populations, for he came back with unanswerable proof of their gratitude, in the shape of £3000. Shortly after this appeared a prospectus of the "New, Grand, National, Benevolent Insurance Company, for the Industrious Classes." This invaluable document, after setting forth the immense benefits to society arising from habits of providence, and the introduction of insurance companies—proving the infamous rate of premiums exacted by the existent offices, and their inapplicability to the wants of the honest artisan, and declaring that nothing but the purest intentions of benefiting their fellow-creatures, and raising the moral tone of society, had led the directors to institute a new society, founded on the noblest principles and the most moderate calculations—proceeded to demonstrate that twenty-four and a half per cent was the smallest possible return the shareholders could anticipate. The company began under the fairest auspices: an archbishop was caught as president, on the condition always that he should give nothing but his name to the society. Uncle Jack—more euphoniously designated as "the celebrated philanthropist, John Jones Tibbets, Esquire"—was honorary secretary, and the capital stated at two millions. But such was the obtuseness of the industrious classes, so little did they perceive the benefits of sub-

scribing one-and-ninepence a-week from the age of twenty-one to fifty, in order to secure at the latter age the annuity of £18, that the company dissolved into thin air, and with it dissolved Uncle Jack's £3000. Nothing more was then seen or heard of him for three years. So obscure was his existence, that on the death of an aunt who left him a small farm in Cornwall, it was necessary to advertise that "If John Jones Tibbets, Esq., would apply to Messrs Blunt and Tin, Lothbury, between the hours of ten and four, he would hear of something to his advantage." But, even as a conjuror declares that he will call the ace of spades, and the ace of spades, that you thought you had safely under your foot, turns up on the table—so with this advertisement suddenly turned up Uncle Jack. With inconceivable satisfaction did the new landowner settle himself in his comfortable homestead. The farm, which was about two hundred acres, was in the best possible condition, and saving one or two chemical preparations, which cost Uncle Jack, upon the most scientific principles, thirty acres of buck-wheat, the ears of which came up, poor things, all spotted and speckled, as if they been inoculated with the small-pox, Uncle Jack for the first two years was a thriving man. Unluckily, however, one day Uncle Jack discovered a coal-mine in a beautiful field of Swedish turnips; in another week the house was full of engineers and naturalists, and in another month appeared, in my uncle's best style, much improved by practice, a prospectus of the "Grand National, anti-Monopoly

Coal Company, instituted on behalf of the poor householders of London, and against the Monster Monopoly of the London Coal Wharfs.

"A vein of the finest coal has been discovered on the estates of the celebrated philanthropist, John Jones Tibbets, Esq. This new mine, the Molly Wheal, having been satisfactorily tested by that eminent engineer, Giles Compass, Esq., promises an inexhaustible field to the energies of the benevolent and the wealth of the capitalist. It is calculated that the best coals may be delivered, screened, at the mouth of the Thames, for 18s. per load, yielding a profit of not less than forty-eight per cent to the shareholders. Shares, £50, to be paid in five instalments. Capital to be subscribed, one million. For shares, early application must be made to Messrs Blunt and Tin, solicitors, Lothbury."

Here, then, was something tangible for fellow-creatures to go on—there was land, there was a mine, there was coal, and there actually came shareholders and capital. Uncle Jack was so persuaded that his fortune was now to be made, and had, moreover, so great a desire to share the glory of ruining the monster monopoly of the London wharfs, that he refused a very large offer to dispose of the property altogether, remained chief shareholder, and removed to London, where he set up his carriage, and gave dinners to his fellow-directors. For no less than three years did this company flourish, having submitted the entire direction and working of the mines to that eminent engineer,

Giles Compass—twenty per cent was paid regularly by that gentleman to the shareholders, and the shares were at more than cent per cent, when one bright morning Giles Compass, Esq., unexpectedly removed himself to that wider field for genius like his, the United States; and it was discovered that the mine had for more than a year run itself into a great pit of water, and that Mr Compass had been paying the shareholders out of their own capital. My uncle had the satisfaction this time of being ruined in very good company; three doctors of divinity, two county members, a Scotch lord, and an East India director, were all in the same boat—that boat which went down with the coal-mine into the great water-pit!

It was just after this event that Uncle Jack, sanguine and light-hearted as ever, suddenly recollected his sister, Mrs Caxton, and not knowing where else to dine, thought he would repose his limbs under my father's *trabes citrea*, which the ingenious W. S. Landor opines should be translated "mahogany." You never saw a more charming man than Uncle Jack. All plump people are more popular than thin people. There is something jovial and pleasant in the sight of a round face! What conspiracy could succeed when its head was a lean and hungry-looking fellow like Cassius? If the Roman patriots had had Uncle Jack amongst them, perhaps they would never have furnished a tragedy to Shakespeare. Uncle Jack was as plump as a partridge—not unwieldy, not corpulent, not obese, not "*vastus*," which Cicero objects to in an orator—but every crevice

comfortably filled up. Like the ocean, "time wrote no wrinkles on his glassy (or brassy) brow." His natural lines were all upward curves, his smile most ingratiating, his eye so frank, even his trick of rubbing his clean, well-fed, English-looking hands, had something about it coaxing and *débonnaire*, something that actually decoyed you into trusting your money into hands so prepossessing. Indeed, to him might be fully applied the expression—"Sedem animæ in extremis digitis habet;" "He had his soul's seat in his finger-ends." The critics observe that few men have ever united in equal perfection the imaginative with the scientific faculties. "Happy he," exclaims Schiller, "who combines the enthusiast's warmth with the worldly man's light"—light and warmth, Uncle Jack had them both. He was a perfect symphony of bewitching enthusiasm and convincing calculation. Dicæopolis in the *Acharnenses*, in presenting a gentleman called Nicharchus to the audience, observes—"He is small, I confess, but there is nothing lost in him; all is knave that is not fool." Parodying the equivocal compliment, I may say that though Uncle Jack was no giant, there was nothing lost in him. Whatever was not philanthropy was arithmetic, and whatever was not arithmetic was philanthropy. He would have been equally dear to Howard and to Cocker. Uncle Jack was comely, too—clear-skinned and florid, had a little mouth, with good teeth, wore no whiskers, shaved his beard as close as if it were one of his grand national companies; his hair, once somewhat sandy, was now

rather greyish, which increased the respectability of his appearance; and he wore it flat at the sides and raised in a peak at the top; his organs of constructiveness and ideality were pronounced by Mr Squills to be prodigious, and those freely-developed bumps gave great breadth to his forehead. Well-shaped, too, was Uncle Jack, about five feet eight, the proper height for an active man of business. He wore a black coat; but to make the nap look the fresher, he had given it the relief of gilt buttons, on which were wrought a small crown and anchor; at a distance this button looked like the king's button, and gave him the air of one who has a place about Court. He always wore a white neckcloth without starch, a frill, and a diamond pin, which last furnished him with observations upon certain mines of Mexico, which he had a great, but hitherto unsatisfied desire of seeing worked by a grand National United Britons Company. His waistcoat of a morning was pale buff—of an evening, embroidered velvet; wherewith were connected sundry schemes of an "association for the improvement of native manufactures." His trousers, matutinally, were of the colour vulgarly called "blotting-paper;" and he never wore boots, which, he said, unfitted a man for exercise, but short drab gaiters and square-toed shoes. His watch-chain was garnished with a vast number of seals: each seal, indeed, represented the device of some defunct company, and they might be said to resemble the scalps of the slain, worn by the aboriginal Iroquois—concerning whom, indeed, he had once entertained philanthropic designs, com-

pounded of conversion to Christianity on the principles of the English Episcopal Church, and of an advantageous exchange of beaver-skins for bibles, brandy, and gunpowder.

That Uncle Jack should win my heart was no wonder; my mother's he had always won from her earliest recollection of his having persuaded her to let her great doll (a present from her godmother) be put up to a raffle for the benefit of the chimney-sweepers. "So like him—so good!" she would often say pensively; "they paid sixpence a-piece for the raffle—twenty tickets, and the doll cost £2. Nobody was taken in, and the doll, poor thing (it had such blue eyes!) went for a quarter of its value. But Jack said nobody could guess what good the ten shillings did to the chimney-sweepers." Naturally enough, I say, my mother liked Uncle Jack! but my father liked him quite as well, and that was a strong proof of my uncle's powers of captivation. However, it is noticeable that when some retired scholar is once interested in an active man of the world, he is more inclined to admire him than others are. Sympathy with such a companion gratifies at once his curiosity and his indolence; he can travel with him, scheme with him, fight with him, go with him through all the adventures of which his own books speak so eloquently, and all the time never stir from his easy-chair. My father said "that it was like listening to Ulysses to hear Uncle Jack!" Uncle Jack, too, had been in Greece and Asia Minor, gone over the site of the siege of Troy, ate figs at Marathon, shot hares in

the Peloponnesus, and drank three pints of brown stout at the top of the Great Pyramid.

Therefore, Uncle Jack was like a book of reference to my father. Verily at times he looked on him *as* a book, and took him down after dinner as he would a volume of Dodwell or Pausanias. In fact, I believe that scholars who never move from their cells are not the less an eminently curious, bustling, active race, rightly understood. Even as old Burton saith of himself—"Though I live a collegiate student, and lead a monastic life, sequestered from those tumults and troubles of the world, I hear and see what is done abroad, how others run, ride, turmoil, and macerate themselves in town and country:" which citation sufficeth to show that scholars are naturally the most active men of the world, only that while their heads plot with Augustus, fight with Julius, sail with Columbus, and change the face of the globe with Alexander, Attila, or Mahomet, there is a certain mysterious attraction, which our improved knowledge of mesmerism will doubtless soon explain to the satisfaction of science, between that extremer and antipodal part of the human frame, called in the vulgate "the seat of honour," and the stuffed leather of an armed chair. Learning somehow or other sinks down to that part into which it was first driven, and produces therein a leaden heaviness and weight, which counteract those lively emotions of the brain, that might otherwise render students too mercurial and agile for the safety of established order. I leave this conjecture to the consideration of experimentalists in the physics.

I was still more delighted than my father with Uncle Jack. He was full of amusing tricks, could conjure wonderfully, make a bunch of keys dance a hornpipe, and if ever you gave him half-a-crown, he was sure to turn it into a halfpenny. He was only unsuccessful in turning my halfpennies into halfcrowns.

We took long walks together, and in the midst of his most diverting conversation my uncle was always an observer. He would stop to examine the nature of the soil, fill my pockets (not his own) with great lumps of clay, stones, and rubbish, to analyse when he got home, by the help of some chemical apparatus he had borrowed from Mr Squills. He would stand an hour at a cottage door, admiring the little girls who were straw-platting, and then walk into the nearest farm-houses, to suggest the feasibility of "a national straw-plat association." All this fertility of intellect was, alas! wasted in that "ingrata terra" into which Uncle Jack had fallen. No squire could be persuaded into the belief that his mother-stone was pregnant with minerals; no farmer talked into weaving straw-plat into a proprietary association. So, even as an ogre, having devastated the surrounding country, begins to cast a hungry eye on his own little ones, Uncle Jack's mouth, long defrauded of jucier and more legitimate morsels, began to water for a bite of my innocent father.

CHAPTER III.

At this time we were living in what may be called a very respectable style for people who made no pretence to ostentation. On the skirts of a large village stood a square red brick house, about the date of Queen Anne. Upon the top of the house was a balustrade; why, heaven knows—for nobody, except our great tom-cat Ralph, ever walked upon the leads—but so it was, and so it often is in houses from the time of Elizabeth, yea, even to that of Victoria. This balustrade was divided by low piers, on each of which was placed a round ball. The centre of the house was distinguishable by an architrave, in the shape of a triangle, under which was a niche, probably meant for a figure, but the figure was not forthcoming. Below this was the window (encased with carved pilasters) of my dear mother's little sitting-room; and lower still, raised on a flight of six steps, was a very handsome-looking door, with a projecting porch. All the windows, with smallish panes and largish frames, were relieved with stone copings;—so that the house had an air of solidity, and well-to-do-ness about it—nothing tricky on the one hand, nothing decayed on the other. The

house stood a little back from the garden gates, which were large, and set between two piers surmounted with vases. Many might object, that in wet weather you had to walk some way to your carriage; but we obviated that objection by not keeping a carriage. To the right of the house the enclosure contained a little lawn, a laurel hermitage, a square pond, a modest greenhouse, and half-a-dozen plots of mignonette, heliotrope, roses, pinks, sweet-william, &c. To the left spread the kitchen-garden, lying screened by espaliers yielding the finest apples in the neighbourhood, and divided by three winding gravel walks, of which the extremest was backed by a wall, whereon, as it lay full south, peaches, pears, and nectarines sunned themselves early into well-remembered flavour. This walk was appropriated to my father. Book in hand, he would, on fine days, pace to and fro, often stopping, dear man, to jot down a pencil-note, gesticulate, or soliloquise. And there, when not in his study, my mother would be sure to find him. In these deambulations, as he called them, he had generally a companion so extraordinary, that I expect to be met with a hillalu of incredulous contempt when I specify it. Nevertheless I vow and protest that it is strictly true, and no invention of an exaggerating romancer. It happened one day that my mother had coaxed Mr Caxton to walk with her to market. By the way they passed a sward of green, on which sundry little boys were engaged upon the lapidation of a lame duck. It seemed that the duck was to have been taken to market,

when it was discovered not only to be lame, but dyspeptic ; perhaps some weed had disagreed with its ganglionic apparatus, poor thing. However that be, the goodwife had declared that the duck was good for nothing ; and upon the petition of her children, it had been consigned to them for a little innocent amusement, and to keep them out of harm's way. My mother declared that she never before saw her lord and master roused to such animation. He dispersed the urchins, released the duck, carried it home, kept it in a basket by the fire, fed it and physicked it till it recovered ; and then it was consigned to the square pond. But lo ! the duck knew its benefactor ; and whenever my father appeared outside his door, it would catch sight of him, flap from the pond, gain the lawn, and hobble after him (for it never quite recovered the use of its left leg), till it reached the walk by the peaches ; and there sometimes it would sit, gravely watching its master's deambulations ; sometimes stroll by his side, and, at all events, never leave him till, at his return home, he fed it with his own hands ; and, quacking her peaceful adieus, the nymph then retired to her natural element.

With the exception of my mother's favourite morning-room, the principal sitting-rooms—that is, the study, the dining-room, and what was emphatically called " the best drawing-room," which was only occupied on great occasions, looked south. Tall beeches, firs, poplars, and a few oaks backed the house, and indeed surrounded it

on all sides but the south; so that it was well sheltered from the winter cold and the summer heat. Our principal domestic, in dignity and station, was Mrs Primmins, who was waiting gentlewoman, housekeeper, and tyrannical dictatrix of the whole establishment. Two other maids, a gardener, and a footman, composed the rest of the serving household. Save a few pasture-fields, which he let, my father was not troubled with land. His income was derived from the interest of about £15,000, partly in the three per cents, partly on mortgage; and what with my mother and Mrs Primmins, this income always yielded enough to satisfy my father's single hobby for books, pay for my education, and entertain our neighbours, rarely, indeed, at dinner, but very often at tea. My dear mother boasted that our society was very select. It consisted chiefly of the clergyman and his family, two old maids who gave themselves great airs, a gentleman who had been in the East India service, and who lived in a large white house at the top of the hill; some half-a-dozen squires and their wives and children; Mr Squills, still a bachelor: and once a-year cards were exchanged—and dinners too—with certain aristocrats who inspired my mother with a great deal of unnecessary awe; since she declared they were the most good-natured, easy people in the world, and always stuck their cards in the most conspicuous part of the looking-glass frame over the chimney-piece of the best drawing-room. Thus you perceive that our natural position was one highly creditable to us, proving the

soundness of our finances and the gentility of our pedigree—of which last more hereafter. At present I content myself with saying on that head, that even the proudest of the neighbouring squirearchs always spoke of us as a very ancient family. But all my father ever said to evince pride of ancestry, was in honour of William Caxton, citizen and printer in the reign of Edward IV.—"Clarum et venerabile nomen!" an ancestor a man of letters might be justly vain of.

"Heus," said my father, stopping short, and lifting his eyes from the Colloquies of Erasmus, "salve multum, jucundissime."

Uncle Jack was not much of a scholar, but he knew enough of Latin to answer, "Salve tantundem, mi frater."

My father smiled approvingly. "I see you comprehend true urbanity, or politeness, as we phrase it. There is an elegance in addressing the husband of your sister as brother. Erasmus commends it in his opening chapter, under the head of 'Salutandi formulæ.' And, indeed," added my father thoughtfully, "there is no great difference between politeness and affection. My author here observes that it is polite to express salutation in certain minor distresses of nature. One should salute a gentleman in yawning, salute him in hiccuping, salute him in sneezing, salute him in coughing; and that evidently because of your interest in his health; for he may dislocate his jaw in yawning, and the hiccup is often a symptom of grave disorder, and sneezing is perilous to the small blood-vessels of the head, and

coughing is either a tracheal, bronchial, pulmonary, or ganglionic affection."

"Very true. The Turks always salute in sneezing, and they are a remarkably polite people," said Uncle Jack. "But, my dear brother, I was just looking with admiration at these apple-trees of yours. I never saw finer. I am a great judge of apples. I find, in talking with my sister, that you make very little profit by them. That's a pity. One might establish a cider orchard in this county. You can take your own fields in hand; you can hire more, so as to make the whole, say a hundred acres. You can plant a very extensive apple-orchard on a grand scale. I have just run through the calculations; they are quite startling. Take 40 trees per acre—that's the proper average—at 1s. 6d. per tree; 4000 trees for 100 acres, £300; labour of digging, trenching, say £10 an acre—total for 100 acres, £1000. Pave the bottoms of the holes to prevent the tap-root striking down into the bad soil—oh, I am very close and careful you see, in all minutiæ!—always was—pave 'em with rubbish and stones, 6d. a hole; that for 4000 trees the 100 acres is £100. Add the rent of the land at 30s. an acre, £150. And how stands the total?" Here Uncle Jack proceeded rapidly ticking off the items with his fingers:—

"Trees, ...	£300
Labour, ...	1000
Paving holes, ...	100
Rent, ...	150
Total, . .	£1550

That's your expense. Mark.—Now to the profit. Orchards in Kent realise £100 an acre, some even £150; but let's be moderate, say only £50 an acre, and your gross profit per year, from a capital of £1550, will be £5000—£5000 a-year. Think of that, brother Caxton. Deduct 10 per cent, or £500 a-year, for gardeners' wages, manure, &c., and the net product is £4500. Your fortune's made, man—it is made—I wish you joy!" and Uncle Jack rubbed his hands.

"Bless me, father," said eagerly the young Pisistratus, who had swallowed with ravished ears every syllable and figure of this inviting calculation, "why, we should be as rich as Squire Rollick; and then, you know, sir, you could keep a pack of fox-hounds."

"And buy a large library," added Uncle Jack, with more subtle knowledge of human nature as to its appropriate temptations. "There's my friend the archbishop's collection to be sold."

Slowly recovering his breath, my father gently turned his eyes from one to the other; and then, laying his left hand on my head, while with the right he held up Erasmus rebukingly to Uncle Jack, said—

"See how easily you can sow covetousness and avidity in the youthful mind. Ah, brother!"

"You are too severe, sir. See how the dear boy hangs his head! Fie!—natural enthusiasm of his years—'gay hope by fancy fed,' as the poet says. Why, for that fine boy's sake, you ought not to lose so certain an occasion of wealth, I may say, untold. For, observe, you will form a nursery of crabs; each year

you go on grafting and enlarging your plantation, renting, nay, why not buying, more land? Gad, sir, in twenty years you might cover half the country; but say you stop short at 2000 acres, why, the net profit is £90,000 a-year. A duke's income—a duke's—and going a-begging, as I may say."

"But stop," said I, modestly; "the trees don't grow in a year. I know when our last apple-tree was planted—it is five years ago—it was then three years old, and it only bore one half-bushel last autumn."

"What an intelligent lad it is!—Good head there. Oh, he'll do credit to his great fortune, brother," said Uncle Jack approvingly. "True, my boy. But in the meanwhile we could fill the ground, as they do in Kent, with gooseberries and currants, or onions and cabbages. Nevertheless, considering we are not great capitalists, I am afraid we must give up a share of our profits to diminish our outlay. So, harkye, Pisistratus—(look at him, brother—simple as he stands there, I think he is born with a silver spoon in his mouth)—harkye, now to the mysteries of speculation. Your father shall quietly buy the land, and then, presto! we will issue a prospectus, and start a company. Associations can wait five years for a return. Every year, meanwhile, increases the value of the shares. Your father takes, we say, fifty shares at £50 each, paying only an instalment of £2 a share. He sells thirty-five shares at cent per cent. He keeps the remaining fifteen, and his fortune's made all the same;

only it is not quite so large as if he had kept the whole concern in his own hands. What say you now, brother Caxton? '*Visne edere pomum?*' as we used to say at school."

"I don't want a shilling more than I have got," said my father resolutely. "My wife would not love me better; my food would not nourish me more; my boy would not, in all probability, be half so hardy, or a tenth part so industrious; and——"

"But," interrupted Uncle Jack, pertinaciously, and reserving his grand argument for the last, "the good you would confer on the community—the progress given to the natural productions of your country, the wholesome beverage of cider brought within cheap reach of the labouring classes. If it was only for your sake, should I have urged this question? should I now? is it in my character? But for the sake of the public! mankind! of our fellow-creatures! Why, sir, England could not get on if gentlemen like you had not a little philanthropy and speculation."

"Papæ!" exclaimed my father, "to think that England can't get on without turning Austin Caxton into an apple-merchant! My dear Jack, listen. You remind me of a colloquy in this book; wait a bit—here it is—*Pamphagus and Cocles.*—Cocles recognises his friend, who had been absent for many years, by his eminent and remarkable nose.—Pamphagus says, rather irritably, that he is not ashamed of his nose. 'Ashamed of it! no indeed,' says Cocles: 'I never saw a nose that could be put to so many uses!' 'Ha,' says Pamphagus

(whose curiosity is aroused), 'uses! what uses?' Whereon (*lepidissime frater!*) Cocles, with eloquence as rapid as yours, runs on with a countless list of the uses to which so vast a development of the organ can be applied. 'If the cellar was deep, it could sniff up the wine like an elephant's trunk,—if the bellows were missing, it could blow the fire,—if the lamp was too glaring, it could suffice for a shade,—it would serve as a speaking-trumpet to a herald,—it could sound a signal of battle in the field,—it would do for a wedge in wood-cutting—a spade for digging—a scythe for mowing—an anchor in sailing; till Pamphagus cries out, 'Lucky dog that I am! and I never knew before what a useful piece of furniture I carried about with me.'" My father paused and strove to whistle, but that effort of harmony failed him—and he added smiling, "So much for my apple-trees, brother John. Leave them to their natural destination of filling tarts and dumplings."

Uncle Jack looked a little discomposed for a moment; but he then laughed with his usual heartiness, and saw that he had not yet got to my father's blind side. I confess that my revered parent rose in my estimation after that conference; and I began to see that a man may not be quite without common sense, though he is a scholar. Indeed, whether it was that Uncle Jack's visit acted as a gentle stimulant to his relaxed faculties, or that I, now grown older and wiser, began to see his character more clearly, I date from those summer holidays the commencement of that familiar and endearing intimacy which ever after existed between my father

and myself. Often I deserted the more extensive rambles of Uncle Jack, or the greater allurements of a cricket-match in the village, or a day's fishing in Squire Rollick's preserves, for a quiet stroll with my father by the old peach-wall;—sometimes silent, indeed, and already musing over the future, while he was busy with the past, but amply rewarded when, suspending his lecture, he would pour forth hoards of varied learning, rendered amusing by his quaint comments, and that Socratic satire which only fell short of wit because it never passed into malice. At some moments, indeed, the vein ran into eloquence; and with some fine heroic sentiment in his old books, his stooping form rose erect, his eye flashed; and you saw that he had not been originally formed and wholly meant for the obscure seclusion in which his harmless days now wore contentedly away.

CHAPTER IV.

"EGAD, sir, the country is going to the dogs! Our sentiments are not represented in parliament or out of it. The County Mercury has ratted, and be hanged to it! and now we have not one newspaper in the whole shire to express the sentiments of the respectable part of the community?"

This speech was made on the occasion of one of the rare dinners given by Mr and Mrs Caxton to the grandees of the neighbourhood, and uttered by no less a person than Squire Rollick, of Rollick Hall, chairman of the quarter-sessions.

I confess that I (for I was permitted on that first occasion not only to dine with the guests, but to outstay the ladies, in virtue of my growing years, and my promise to abstain from the decanters)—I confess, I say, that I, poor innocent, was puzzled to conjecture what sudden interest in the county newspaper could cause Uncle Jack to prick up his ears like a war-horse at the sound of the drum, and rush so incontinently across the interval between Squire Rollick and himself, but the mind of that deep and truly knowing man was not to be plumbed by a chit of my age. You could not fish for the shy salmon in that pool with a crooked

pin and a bobbin, as you would for minnows ; or, to indulge in a more worthy illustration, you could not say of him, as St Gregory saith of the streams of Jordan, "A lamb could wade easily through that ford."

"Not a county newspaper to advocate the rights of——" here my uncle stopped, as if at a loss, and whispered in my ear, "What are his politics ?" "Don't know," answered I. Uncle Jack intuitively took down from his memory the phrase most readily at hand, and added, with a nasal intonation, "the rights of our distressed fellow-creatures !"

My father scratched his eyebrow with his fore-finger, as he was apt to do when doubtful ; the rest of the company—a silent set—looked up.

"Fellow-creatures !" said Mr Rollick—"fellow-fiddlesticks !"

Uncle Jack was clearly in the wrong-box. He drew out of it cautiously—"I mean," said he, "our *respectable* fellow-creatures ;" and then suddenly it occurred to him that a "County Mercury" would naturally represent the agricultural interest, and that if Mr Rollick said that the "County Mercury ought to be hanged," he was one of those politicians who had already begun to call the agricultural interest "a Vampire." Flushed with that fancied discovery, Uncle Jack rushed on, intending to bear along with the stream, thus fortunately directed, all the "rubbish"* subsequently shot into Covent Garden and Hall of Commerce.

* "We talked sad rubbish when we first began," says Mr Cobden in one of his speeches.

"Yes, respectable fellow-creatures, men of capital and enterprise! For what are these country squires compared to our wealthy merchants? What is this agricultural interest that professes to be the prop of the land?"

"Professes!" cried Squire Rollick—"it *is* the prop of the land; and as for those manufacturing fellows who have bought up the Mercury——"

"Bought up the Mercury, have they, the villains!" cried Uncle Jack, interrupting the Squire, and now bursting into full scent—"Depend upon it, sir, it is a part of a diabolical system of buying up, which must be exposed manfully.—Yes, as I was saying, what is that agricultural interest which they desire to ruin? which they declare to be so bloated—which they call 'a vampire!' they the true blood-suckers, the venomous millocrats! Fellow-creatures, sir! I may well call distressed fellow-creatures the members of that much suffering class of which you yourself are an ornament. What can be more deserving of our best efforts for relief, than a country gentleman like yourself, we'll say —of a nominal £5000 a-year—compelled to keep up an establishment, pay for his fox-hounds, support the whole population by contributions to the poor-rates, support the whole church by tithes; all justice, jails, and prosecutions by the county rates—all thoroughfares by the highway rates—ground down by mortgages, Jews, or jointures; having to provide for younger children; enormous expenses for cutting his woods, manuring his model farm, and fattening huge oxen till

every pound of flesh costs him five pounds sterling in oil-cake ; and then the lawsuits necessary to protect his rights ; plundered on all hands by poachers, sheep-stealers, dog-stealers, churchwardens, overseers, gardeners, gamekeepers, and that necessary rascal, his steward. If ever there was a distressed fellow-creature in the world, it is a country gentleman with a great estate."

My father evidently thought this an exquisite piece of banter, for by the corner of his mouth I saw that he chuckled inly.

Squire Rollick, who had interrupted the speech by sundry approving exclamations, particularly at the mention of poor-rates, tithes, county-rates, mortgages, and poachers, here pushed the bottle to Uncle Jack, and said, civilly,—"There's a great deal of truth in what you say, Mr Tibbets. The agricultural interest is going to ruin ; and when it does, I would not give *that* for Old England !" and Mr Rollick snapped his finger and thumb. "But what is to be done—done for the county ? There's the rub."

"I was just coming to that," quoth Uncle Jack. "You say that you have not a county paper that upholds your cause, and denounces your enemies."

"Not since the Whigs bought the ——shire Mercury."

"Why, good heavens ! Mr Rollick, how can you suppose that you will have justice done you, if at this time of day you neglect the press ? The press, sir,—there it is—air we breathe ! What you want is a great national—no, not a national—A PROVINCIAL proprietary

weekly journal, supported liberally and steadily by that mighty party whose very existence is at stake. Without such a paper, you are gone, you are dead, extinct, defunct, buried alive; *with* such a paper, well conducted, well edited by a man of the world, of education, of practical experience in agriculture and human nature, mines, corn, manure, insurances, acts of parliament, cattle-shows, the state of parties, and the best interests of society—with such a man and such a paper, you will carry all before you. But it must be done by subscription, by association, by co-operation, by a Grand Provincial Benevolent Agricultural Anti-innovating Society."

"Egad, sir, you are right!" said Mr Rollick, slapping his thigh; "and I'll ride over to our Lord-Lieutenant to-morrow. His eldest son ought to carry the county."

"And he will, if you encourage the press and set up a journal," said Uncle Jack, rubbing his hands, and then gently stretching them out, and drawing them gradually together, as if he were already enclosing in that airy circle the unsuspecting guineas of the unborn association.

All happiness dwells more in the hope than the possession; and at that moment, I dare be sworn that Uncle Jack felt a livelier rapture, *circum præcordia*, warming his entrails, and diffusing throughout his whole frame of five feet eight the prophetic glow of the Magna Diva Moneta, than if he had enjoyed for ten years the actual possession of King Crœsus's privy purse.

"I thought Uncle Jack was not a Tory," said I to my father the next day.

My father, who cared nothing for politics, opened his eyes.

"Are you a Tory or a Whig, papa?"

"Um," said my father—"there's a great deal to be said on both sides of the question. You see, my boy, that Mrs Primmins has a great many moulds for our butter-pats; sometimes they come up with a crown on them, sometimes with the more popular impress of a cow. It is all very well for those who dish up the butter to print it according to their taste, or in proof of their abilities; it is enough for us to butter our bread, say grace, and pay for the dairy. Do you understand?"

"Not a bit, sir."

"Your namesake Pisistratus was wiser than you, then," said my father. "And now let us feed the duck. Where's your uncle?"

"He has borrowed Mr Squills' mare, sir, and gone with Squire Rollick to the great lord they were talking of."

"Oho!" said my father, "brother Jack is going to print his butter!"

And indeed Uncle Jack played his cards so well on this occasion, and set before the Lord-Lieutenant, with whom he had a personal interview, so fine a prospectus, and so nice a calculation, that before my holidays were over, he was installed in a very handsome office in the county town, with private apartments over it, and a

salary of £500 a-year—for advocating the cause of his distressed fellow-creatures, including noblemen, squires, yeomanry, farmers, and all yearly subscribers in the NEW PROPRIETARY AGRICULTURAL ANTI-INNOVATING ——SHIRE WEEKLY GAZETTE. At the head of his newspaper Uncle Jack caused to be engraved a crown supported by a flail and a crook, with the motto, "Pro rege et grege:"—And that was the way in which Uncle Jack printed his pats of butter.

CHAPTER V.

I SEEMED to myself to have made a leap in life when I returned to school. I no longer felt as a boy. Uncle Jack, out of his own purse, had presented me with my first pair of Wellington boots; my mother had been coaxed into allowing me a small tail to jackets hitherto tail-less; my collars, which had been wont, spaniel-like, to flap and fall about my neck, now, terrier-wise, stood erect and rampant, encompassed with a circumvallation of whalebone, buckram, and black silk. I was, in truth, nearly seventeen, and I gave myself the airs of a man. Now, be it observed, that that crisis in adolescent existence wherein we first pass from Master Sisty into Mr Pisistratus, or Pisistratus Caxton, Esq.—wherein we arrogate, and with tacit concession from our elders, the long-envied title of "young man"—always seems a sudden and imprompt upshooting and elevation. We do not mark the gradual preparations thereto; we remember only one distinct period in which all the signs and symptoms burst and effloresced together; Wellington boots, coat tail, cravat, down on the upper lip, thoughts on razors, reveries on young ladies, and a new kind of sense of poetry.

I began now to read steadily, to understand what I did read, and to cast some anxious looks towards the future, with vague notions that I had a place to win in the world, and that nothing is to be won without perseverance and labour; and so I went on till I was seventeen, and at the head of the school, when I received the two letters I subjoin.

1.—From Augustine Caxton, Esq.

"My dear Son,—I have informed Dr Herman that you will not return to him after the approaching holidays. You are old enough now to look forward to the embraces of our beloved Alma Mater, and I think studious enough to hope for the honours she bestows on her worthier sons. You are already entered at Trinity,—and in fancy I see my youth return to me in your image. I see you wandering where the Cam steals its way through those noble gardens; and, confusing you with myself, I recall the old dreams that haunted me when the chiming bells swung over the placid waters. 'Verum secretumque *Mouseion*, quam multa dictatis, quam multa invenitis!' There at that illustrious college, unless the race has indeed degenerated, you will measure yourself with young giants. You will see those who, in the Law, the Church, the State, or the still cloisters of Learning, are destined to become the eminent leaders of your age. To rank amongst them you are not forbidden to aspire; he who in youth 'can scorn delight, and love laborious days,' should pitch high his ambition.

"Your Uncle Jack says he has done wonders with his newspaper,—though Mr Rollick grumbles, and declares that it is full of theories, and that it puzzles the farmers. Uncle Jack, in reply, contends that he creates an audience, not addresses one,—and sighs that his genius is thrown away in a provincial town. In fact, he really is a very clever man, and might do much in London, I dare say. He often comes over to dine and sleep, returning the next morning. His energy is wonderful—and contagious. Can you imagine that he has actually stirred up the flame of my vanity, by constantly poking at the bars? Metaphor apart—I find myself collecting all my notes and commonplaces, and wondering to see how easily they fall into method, and take shape in chapters and books. I cannot help smiling when I add, that I fancy I am going to become an author; and smiling more when I think that your Uncle Jack should have provoked me into so egregious an ambition. However, I have read some passages of my book to your mother, and she says, 'it is vastly fine,' which is encouraging. Your mother has great good sense, though I don't mean to say that she has much learning,—which is a wonder, considering that Pic de la Mirandola was nothing to her father. Yet he died, dear great man, and never printed a line,—while I—positively I blush to think of my temerity!

"Adieu, my son; make the best of the time that remains with you at the Philhellenic. A full mind is the true Pantheism, *plena Jovis*. It is only in some

corner of the brain which we leave empty that Vice can obtain a lodging. When she knocks at your door, my son, be able to say, 'No room for your ladyship,—pass on.' Your affectionate father,

"A. CAXTON."

2.—FROM MRS CAXTON.

"MY DEAREST SISTY,—You are coming home!—My heart is so full of that thought that it seems to me as if I could not write anything else. Dear child, you are coming home;—you have done with school, you have done with strangers—you are our own, all our own son again! You are mine again, as you were in the cradle, the nursery, and the garden, Sisty, when we used to throw daisies at each other! You will laugh at me so, when I tell you, that as soon as I heard you were coming home for good, I crept away from the room, and went to my drawer where I keep, you know, all my treasures. There was your little cap that I worked myself, and your poor little nankeen jacket that you were so proud to throw off—oh! and many other relics of you when you were little Sisty, and I was not the cold, formal 'Mother' you call me now, but dear 'Mamma.' I kissed them, Sisty, and said, 'my little child is coming back to me again!' So foolish was I, I forgot all the long years that have passed, and fancied I could carry you again in my arms, and that I should again coax you to say 'God bless papa.' Well, well! I write now between laughing and crying. You cannot

be what you were, but you are still my own dear son—your father's son—dearer to me than all the world—except that father.

"I am so glad, too, that you will come so soon: come while your father is really warm with his book, and while you can encourage and keep him to it. For why should he not be great and famous? Why should not all admire him as we do? You know how proud of him I always was; but I do so long to let the world know *why* I was so proud. And yet, after all, it is not only because he is so wise and learned,—but because he is so good, and has such a large noble heart. But the heart must appear in the book too, as well as the learning. For though it is full of things I don't understand—every now and then there *is* something I do understand—that seems as if that heart spoke out to all the world.

"Your uncle has undertaken to get it published; and your father is going up to town with him about it, as soon as the first volume is finished.

"All are quite well except poor Mrs Jones, who has the ague very bad indeed; Primmins has made her wear a charm for it, and Mrs Jones actually declares she is already much better. One can't deny that there may be a great deal in such things, though it seems quite against the reason. Indeed your father says, 'Why not? A charm must be accompanied by a strong wish on the part of the charmer that it may succeed,—and what is magnetism but a wish?' I don't

quite comprehend this; but, like all your father says, it has more than meets the eye, I am quite sure.

"Only three weeks to the holidays, and then no more school, Sisty—no more school! I shall have your room all done freshly, and made so pretty; they are coming about it to-morrow.

"The duck is quite well, and I really don't think it is quite as lame as it was.

"God bless you, dear, dear child. Your affectionate happy mother. "K. C."

The interval between these letters and the morning on which I was to return home seemed to me like one of those long, restless, yet half-dreamy days which in some infant malady I had passed in a sick-bed. I went through my taskwork mechanically, composed a Greek ode in farewell to the Philhellenic, which Dr Herman pronounced a *chef d'œuvre*, and my father, to whom I sent it in triumph, returned a letter of false English with it, that parodied all my Hellenic barbarisms by imitating them in my mother tongue. However, I swallowed the leek, and consoled myself with the pleasing recollection that, after spending six years in learning to write bad Greek, I should never have any further occasion to avail myself of so precious an accomplishment.

And so came the last day. Then alone, and in a kind of delighted melancholy, I revisited each of the old haunts. The robber's cave we had dug one winter,

and maintained, six of us, against all the police of the little kingdom. The place near the pales where I had fought my first battle. The old beech stump on which I sate to read letters from home! With my knife, rich in six blades (besides a cork-screw, a pen-picker, and a button-hook), I carved my name in large capitals over my desk. Then night came, and the bell rang, and we went to our rooms. And I opened the window and looked out. I saw all the stars, and wondered which was mine—which should light to fame and fortune the manhood about to commence. Hope and Ambition were high within me;—and yet, behind them, stood Melancholy. Ah! who amongst you, readers, can now summon back all those thoughts, sweet and sad—all that untold, half-conscious regret for the past—all those vague longings for the future, which made a poet of the dullest on the last night before leaving boyhood and school for ever.

PART THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

It was a beautiful summer afternoon when the coach set me down at my father's gate. Mrs Primmins herself ran out to welcome me; and I had scarcely escaped from the warm clasp of her friendly hand, before I was in the arms of my mother.

As soon as that tenderest of parents was convinced that I was not famished, seeing that I had dined two hours ago at Dr Herman's, she led me gently across the garden towards the arbour. "You will find your father so cheerful," said she, wiping away a tear. "His brother is with him."

I stopped. *His* brother! Will the reader believe it?—I had never heard that he had a brother, so little were family affairs ever discussed in my hearing.

"*His* brother!" said I. "Have I then an Uncle Caxton as well as an Uncle Jack?"

"Yes, my love," said my mother. And then she added, "Your father and he were not such good friends

as they ought to have been, and the Captain has been abroad. However, thank heaven ! they are now quite reconciled."

We had time for no more—we were in the arbour. There, a table was spread with wine and fruit—the gentlemen were at their dessert ; and those gentlemen were my father, Uncle Jack, Mr Squills, and—tall, lean, buttoned-to-the-chin—an erect, martial, majestic, and imposing personage, who seemed worthy of a place in my great ancestor's "Boke of Chivalrie."

All rose as I entered ; but my poor father, who was always slow in his movements, had the last of me. Uncle Jack had left the very powerful impression of his great seal-ring on my fingers ; Mr Squills had patted me on the shoulder, and pronounced me "wonderfully grown ;" my new-found relative had with great dignity said, "Nephew, your hand, sir—I am Captain de Caxton ;" and even the tame duck had taken her beak from her wing, and rubbed it gently between my legs, which was her usual mode of salutation, before my father placed his pale hand on my forehead, and, looking at me for a moment with unutterable sweetness, said, "More and more like your mother —God bless you !"

A chair had been kept vacant for me between my father and his brother. I sat down in haste, and with a tingling colour on my cheeks and a rising at my throat, so much had the unusual kindness of my father's greeting affected me ; and then there came over me a sense of my new position. I was no

longer a schoolboy at home for his brief holiday: I had returned to the shelter of the roof-tree to become myself one of its supports. I was at last a man, privileged to aid or solace those dear ones who had ministered, as yet without return, to me. That is a very strange crisis in our life when we come home "*for good.*" Home seems a different thing: before, one has been but a sort of guest after all, only welcomed and indulged, and little festivities held in honour of the released and happy child. But to come home *for good*—to have done with school and boyhood—is to be a guest, a child no more. It is to share the every-day life of cares and duties—it is to enter into the *confidences* of home. Is it not so? I could have buried my face in my hands, and wept!

My father, with all his abstraction and all his simplicity, had a knack now and then of penetrating at once to the heart. I verily believe he read all that was passing in mine as easily as if it had been Greek. He stole his arm gently round my waist and whispered, "Hush!" Then lifting his voice he cried aloud, "Brother Roland, you must not let Jack have the best of the argument."

"Brother Austin," replied the Captain, very formally, "Mr Jack, if I may take the liberty so to call him."

"You may indeed," cried Uncle Jack.

"Sir," said the Captain, bowing, "it is a familiarity that does me honour. I was about to say that Mr Jack has retired from the field."

"Far from it," said Squills, dropping an effervescing powder into a chemical mixture which he had been preparing with great attention, composed of sherry and lemon-juice—"far from it. Mr Tibbets—whose organ of combativeness is finely developed, by the by—was saying"—

"That it is a rank sin and shame in the nineteenth century," quoth Uncle Jack, "that a man like my friend Captain Caxton"—

"*De* Caxton, sir—Mr Jack."

"De Caxton—of the highest military talents, of the most illustrious descent—a hero sprung from heroes—should have served so many years, and with such distinction, in his Majesty's service, and should now be only a captain on half-pay. This, I say, comes of the infamous system of purchase, which sets up the highest honours for sale as they did in the Roman empire"—

My father pricked up his ears; but Uncle Jack pushed on before my father could get ready the forces of his meditated interruption.

"A system which a little effort, a little union, can so easily terminate. Yes, sir,"—and Uncle Jack thumped the table, and two cherries bobbed up and smote Captain de Caxton on the nose—"yes, sir, I will undertake to say that I could put the army upon a very different footing. If the poorer and more meritorious gentlemen, like Captain de Caxton, would, as I was just observing, but unite in a grand anti-aristocratic association, each paying a small sum quarterly, we could realise a capital sufficient to outpurchase all these

undeserving individuals, and every man of merit should have his fair chance of promotion."

"Egad, sir," said Squills, "there is something grand in that—eh, Captain?"

"No, sir," replied the Captain quite seriously; "there is in monarchies but one fountain of honour. It would be an interference with a soldier's first duty —his respect for his sovereign."

"On the contrary," said Mr Squills, "it would still be to the sovereigns that one would owe the promotion."

"Honour," pursued the Captain, colouring up, and unheeding this witty interruption, "is the reward of a soldier. What do I care that a young jackanapes buys his colonelcy over my head? Sir, he does not buy from me my wounds and my services. Sir, he does not buy from me the medal I won at Waterloo. He is a rich man, and I am a poor man; he is called—colonel, because he paid money for the *name*. That pleases him; well and good. It would not please me: I had rather remain a captain, and feel my dignity, not in my title, but in the services by which it has been won. A beggarly, rascally association of stock-brokers, for aught I know, buy *me* a company! I don't want to be uncivil, or I would say damn 'em, Mr—sir—Jack!"

A sort of thrill ran through the Captain's audience —even Uncle Jack seemed touched, for he stared very hard at the grim veteran, and said nothing. The pause was awkward—Mr Squills broke it. "I should like,"

quoth he, "to see your Waterloo medal—you have it not about you?"

"Mr Squills," answered the Captain, "it lies next to my heart while I live. It shall be buried in my coffin, and I shall rise with it, at the word of com mand, on the day of the Grand Review!" So saying, the Captain leisurely unbuttoned his coat, and, detaching from a piece of striped ribbon as ugly a specimen of the art of the silversmith (begging its pardon) as ever rewarded merit at the expense of taste, placed the medal on the table.

The medal passed round, without a word, from hand to hand.

"It is strange," at last said my father, "how such trifles can be made of such value—how in one age a man sells his life for what in the next age he would not give a button! A Greek esteemed beyond price a few leaves of olive twisted into a circular shape, and set upon his head—a very ridiculous headgear we should now call it! An American Indian prefers a decoration of human scalps, which, I apprehend, we should all agree (save and except Mr Squills, who is accustomed to such things) to be a very disgusting addition to one's personal attractions; and my brother values this piece of silver, which may be worth about five shillings, more than Jack does a gold mine, or I do the library of the London Museum. A time will come when people will think that as idle a decoration as leaves and scalps."

"Brother," said the Captain, "there is nothing strange in the matter. It is as plain as a pike-staff to a man who understands the principles of honour."

"Possibly," said my father mildly. "I should like to hear what you have to say upon honour. I am sure it would very much edify us all."

CHAPTER II.

MY UNCLE ROLAND'S DISCOURSE UPON HONOUR.

"GENTLEMEN," began the Captain, at the distinct appeal thus made to him—"Gentlemen, God made the earth, but man made the garden. God made man, but man re-creates himself."

"True, by knowledge," said my father.

"By industry," said Uncle Jack.

"By the physical conditions of his body," said Mr Squills. "He could not have made himself other than he was at first in the woods and wilds if he had fins like a fish, or could only chatter gibberish like a monkey. Hands and a tongue, sir; these are the instruments of progress."

"Mr Squills," said my father, nodding, "Anaxagoras said very much the same thing before you, touching the hands."

"I can't help that," answered Mr Squills; "one could not open one's lips, if one were bound to say what nobody else had said. But, after all, our superiority is less in our *hands* than the greatness of our *thumbs*."

"Albinus, *de Sceleto*, and our own learned William Lawrence, have made a similar remark," again put in my father.

"Hang it, sir!" exclaimed Squills, "what business have you to know everything?"

"Everything! No; but thumbs furnish subjects of investigation to the simplest understanding," said my father, modestly.

"Gentlemen," recommenced my Uncle Roland, "thumbs and hands are given to an Esquimaux, as well as to scholars and surgeons—and what the deuce are they the wiser for them? Sirs, you cannot reduce us thus into mechanism. Look within. Man, I say, recreates himself. How? By the principle of honour. His first desire is to excel some one else—his first impulse is distinction above his fellows. Heaven places in his soul, as if it were a compass, a needle that always points to one end—viz. to honour in that which those around him consider honourable. Therefore, as man at first is exposed to all dangers from wild beasts, and from men as savage as himself, Courage becomes the first quality mankind must honour: therefore the savage is courageous; therefore he covets the praise for courage; therefore he decorates himself with the skins of the beasts he has subdued, or the scalps of the foes he has slain. Sirs, don't tell me that the skins and the scalps are only hide and leather; they are trophies of honour. Don't tell me that they are ridiculous and disgusting; they become glorious as proofs that the savage has emerged

out of the first brute-like egotism, and attached price to the praise which men never give except for works that secure or advance their welfare. By-and-by, sirs, our savages discover that they cannot live in safety amongst themselves, unless they agree to speak the truth to each other : therefore TRUTH becomes valued, and grows into a principle of honour ; so, brother Austin will tell us that in the primitive times, truth was always the attribute of a hero."

"Right," said my father ; "Homer emphatically assigns it to Achilles."

"Out of truth comes the necessity for some kind of rude justice and law. Therefore men, after courage in the warrior, and truth in all, begin to attach honour to the elder, whom they intrust with preserving justice amongst them. So, sirs, LAW is born"——

"But the first lawgivers were priests," quoth my father.

"Sirs, I am coming to that. Whence arises the desire of honour, but from man's necessity of excelling —in other words, of improving his faculties for the *benefit* of others,—though, unconscious of that consequence, man only strives for their *praise?* But that desire for honour is unextinguishable, and man is naturally anxious to carry its rewards beyond the grave. Therefore, he who has slain most lions or enemies, is naturally prone to believe that he shall have the best hunting fields in the country beyond, and take the best place at the banquet. Nature, in all its operations, impresses man with the idea of an invisible Power ;

and the principle of honour—that is, the desire of praise and reward—makes him anxious for the approval which that Power can bestow. Thence comes the first rude idea of RELIGION; and in the death-hymn at the stake, the savage chants songs prophetic of the distinctions he is about to receive. Society goes on; hamlets are built; property is established. He who has more than another has more power than another. Power is honoured. Man covets the honour attached to the power which is attached to possession. Thus the soil is cultivated; thus the rafts are constructed; thus tribe trades with tribe; thus COMMERCE is founded, and CIVILISATION commenced. Sirs, all that seems least connected with honour, as we approach the vulgar days of the present, has its origin in honour, and is but an abuse of its principles. If men nowadays are hucksters and traders—if even military honours are purchased, and a rogue buys his way to a peerage—still all arise from the desire for honour, which society, as it grows old, gives to the outward signs of titles and gold, instead of, as once, to its inward essentials,—courage, truth, justice, enterprise. Therefore, I say, sirs, that honour is the foundation of all improvement in mankind."

"You have argued like a schoolman, brother," said Mr Caxton, admiringly; "but still, as to this round piece of silver—don't we go back to the most barbarous ages in estimating so highly such things as have no real value in themselves—as could not give us one opportunity for instructing our minds?"

"Could not pay for a pair of boots," added Uncle Jack.

"Or," said Mr Squills, "save you one twinge of the cursed rheumatism you have got for life from that night's bivouac in the Portuguese marshes—to say nothing of the bullet in your cranium, and that cork-leg, which must much diminish the salutary effects of your constitutional walk."

"Gentlemen," resumed the Captain, nothing abashed, "in going back to those barbarous ages, I go back to the true principles of honour. It is precisely because this round piece of silver has no value in the market that it is priceless, for thus it is only a proof of desert. Where would be the sense of service in this medal, if it could buy back my leg, or if I could bargain it away for forty thousand a-year? No, sirs, its value is this —that when I wear it on my breast, men shall say, 'that formal old fellow is not so useless as he seems. He was one of those who saved England and freed Europe.' And even when I conceal it here" (and, devoutly kissing the medal, Uncle Roland restored it to its ribbon and its resting-place), "and no eye sees it, its value is yet greater in the thought that my country has not degraded the old and true principles of honour, by paying the soldier who fought for her in the same coin as that in which you, Mr Jack, sir, pay your bootmaker's bill. No, no, gentlemen. As courage was the first virtue that honour called forth—the first virtue from which all safety and civilisation proceed, so we do right to keep that one virtue at least

clear and unsullied from all the money-making, mercenary, pay-me-in-cash abominations which are the vices, not the virtues, of the civilisation it has produced."

My Uncle Roland here came to a full stop; and, filling his glass, rose and said solemnly — "A last bumper, gentlemen, — 'To the dead who died for England!'"

CHAPTER III.

"INDEED, my dear, you must take it. You certainly *have* caught cold: you sneezed three times together."

"Yes, ma'am, because I would take a pinch of Uncle Roland's snuff, just to say that I *had* taken a pinch out of his box—the honour of the thing, you know."

"Ah, my dear! what was that very clever remark you made at the same time, which so pleased your father—something about Jews and the college?"

"Jews and—oh! '*pulverem Olympicum collegisse juvat*,' my dear mother—which means, that it is a pleasure to take a pinch out of a brave man's snuff-box. I say, mother, put down the posset. Yes, I'll take it; I will, indeed. Now, then, sit here—that's right—and tell me all you know about this famous old Captain. Imprimis, he is older than my father?"

"To be sure!" exclaimed my mother, indignantly; "he looks twenty years older; but there is only five years' real difference. Your father must always look young."

"And why does Uncle Roland put that absurd

French *de* before his name—and why were my father and he not good friends—and is he married—and has he any children?"

Scene of this conference—my own little room, new papered on purpose for my return *for good*—trellis-work paper, flowers and birds—all so fresh, and so new, and so clean, and so gay—with my books ranged in neat shelves, and a writing-table by the window; and, without the window, shines the still summer moon. The window is a little open—you scent the flowers and the new-mown hay. Past eleven; and the boy and his dear mother are all alone.

"My dear, my dear! you ask so many questions at once."

"Don't answer them, then. Begin at the beginning, as Nurse Primmins does with her fairy tales—'Once on a time.'"

"Once on a time, then," said my mother—kissing me between the eyes—"once on a time, my love, there was a certain clergyman in Cumberland, who had two sons; he had but a small living, and the boys were to make their own way in the world. But close to the parsonage, on the brow of a hill, rose an old ruin, with one tower left, and this, with half the country round it, had once belonged to the clergyman's family; but all had been sold—all gone piece by piece, you see, my dear, except the presentation to the living (what they call the advowson was sold too), which had been secured to the last of the family. The elder of these

sons was your Uncle Roland—the younger was your father. Now I believe the first quarrel arose from the absurdest thing possible, as your father says; but Roland was exceedingly touchy on all things connected with his ancestors. He was always poring over the old pedigree, or wandering amongst the ruins, or reading books of knight-errantry. Well, where this pedigree began I know not, but it seems that King Henry II. gave some lands in Cumberland to one Sir Adam de Caxton; and from that time, you see, the pedigree went regularly from father to son till Henry V.; then, apparently from the disorders produced, as your father says, by the Wars of the Roses, there was a sad blank left—only one or two names, without dates or marriages, till the time of Henry VII., except that in the reign of Edward IV. there was one insertion of a William Caxton (named in a deed). Now in the village church there was a beautiful brass monument to one Sir William de Caxton, who had been killed at the battle of Bosworth, fighting for that wicked king, Richard III. And about the same time there lived, as you know, the great printer, William Caxton. Well, your father, happening to be in town on a visit to his aunt, took great trouble in hunting up all the old papers he could find at the Herald's College; and sure enough he was overjoyed to satisfy himself that he was descended, not from that poor Sir William, who had been killed in so bad a cause, but from the great printer, who was from a younger branch of the same family, and to whose descendants the estate came, in

the reign of Henry VIII. It was upon this that your Uncle Roland quarrelled with him; and, indeed, I tremble to think that they may touch on that matter again."

"Then, my dear mother, I must say my uncle was wrong there, so far as common sense is concerned; but still, somehow or other, I can understand it. Surely this was not the only cause of estrangement?"

My mother looked down, and moved one hand gently over the other, which was her way when embarrassed. "What was it, my own mother?" said I, coaxingly.

"I believe—that is, I—I think that they were both attached to the same young lady."

"How! you don't mean to say that my father was ever in love with any one but you?"

"Yes, Sisty—yes, and deeply! and," added my mother, after a slight pause, and with a very low sigh, "he never was in love with me; and what is more, he had the frankness to tell me so!"

"And yet you"—

"Married him—yes!" said my mother, raising the softest and purest eyes that ever lover could have wished to read his fate in—"Yes, for the old love was hopeless. I knew that I could make him happy. I knew that he would love me at last, and he does so! My son, your father loves me!"

As she spoke, there came a blush as innocent as virgin ever knew, to my mother's smooth cheek; and she looked so fair, so good, and still so young, all the

while, that you would have said that either Dusius, the Teuton fiend, or Nock, the Scandinavian sea-imp, from whom the learned assure us we derive our modern Daimones, "The Deuce," and Old Nick, had indeed possessed my father, if he had not learned to love such a creature.

I pressed her hand to my lips, but my heart was too full to speak for a moment or so; and then I partially changed the subject.

"Well, and this rivalry estranged them more? And who was the lady?"

"Your father never told me, and I never asked," said my mother simply. "But she was very different from me, I know. Very accomplished, very beautiful, very high-born."

"For all that, my father was a lucky man to escape her. Pass on. What did the Captain do?"

"Why, about that time your grandfather died, and shortly after an aunt, on the mother's side, who was rich and saving, died, and unexpectedly left them each sixteen thousand pounds. Your uncle, with his share, bought back, at an enormous price, the old castle and some land round it, which they say does not bring him in three hundred a year. With the little that remained, he purchased a commission in the army; and the brothers met no more till last week, when Roland suddenly arrived."

"He did not marry this accomplished young lady?"

"No! but he married another, and is a widower."

"Why, he was as inconstant as my father; and

I am sure without so good an excuse. How was that?"

"I don't know. He says nothing about it."

"Has he any children?"

"Two, a son—by the by, you must never speak about *him*. Your uncle briefly said, when I asked him what was his family, 'A girl, ma'am. I had a son, but—'

"'He is dead,' cried your father, in his kind, pitying voice."

"'Dead to me, brother—and you will never mention his name!' You should have seen how stern your uncle looked. I was terrified."

"But the girl—why did not he bring her here?"

"She is still in France, but he talks of going over for her; and we have half promised to visit them both in Cumberland. But, bless me! is that twelve? and the posset quite cold!"

"One word more, dearest mother—one word. My father's book—is he still going on with it?"

"Oh, yes, indeed!" cried my mother, clasping her hands; "and he must read it to you, as he does to me—*you* will understand it so well. I have always been so anxious that the world should know him, and be proud of him as we are,—so,—so anxious!—for, perhaps, Sisty, if he had married that great lady, he would have roused himself, been more ambitious—and I could only make him happy, I could not make him great!"

"So he has listened to you at last?"

"To me!" said my mother, shaking her head and smiling gently. "No, rather to your Uncle Jack, who, I am happy to say, has at length got a proper hold over him."

"A proper hold, my dear mother! Pray beware of Uncle Jack, or we shall all be swept into a coal-mine, or explode with a grand national company for making gunpowder out of tea-leaves!"

"Wicked child!" said my mother, laughing; and then, as she took up her candle and lingered a moment while I wound my watch, she said musingly,—"Yet Jack is very, very clever,—and if for your sake we *could* make a fortune, Sisty!"

"You frighten me out of my wits, mother! You are not in earnest?"

"And if *my* brother could be the means of raising *him* in the world"—

"Your brother would be enough to sink all the ships in the Channel, ma'am," said I, quite irreverently. I was shocked before the words were well out of my mouth; and throwing my arms round my mother's neck, I kissed away the pain I had inflicted.

When I was left alone, and in my own little crib, in which my slumber had ever been so soft and easy,—I might as well have been lying upon cut straw. I tossed to and fro—I could not sleep. I rose, threw on my dressing-gown, lighted my candle, and sat down by the table near the window. First I thought of the unfinished outline of my father's youth, so suddenly sketched before me. I filled up the missing colours,

and fancied the picture explained all that had often perplexed my conjectures. I comprehended, I suppose by some secret sympathy in my own nature (for experience in mankind could have taught me little enough), how an ardent, serious, inquiring mind—struggling into passion under the load of knowledge, had, with that stimulus, sadly and abruptly withdrawn, sunk into the quiet of passive, aimless study. I comprehended how, in the indolence of a happy but unimpassioned marriage, with a companion so gentle, so provident and watchful, yet so little formed to rouse, and task, and fire an intellect naturally calm and meditative—years upon years had crept away in the learned idleness of a solitary scholar. I comprehended, too, how gradually and slowly, as my father entered that stage of middle life, when all men are most prone to ambition—the long-silenced whispers were heard again; and the mind, at last escaping from the listless weight which a baffled and disappointed heart had laid upon it, saw once more, fair as in youth, the only true mistress of Genius —Fame.

Oh! how I sympathised, too, in my mother's gentle triumph. Looking over the past, I could see, year after year, how she had stolen more and more into my father's heart of hearts—how what had been kindness had grown into love—how custom and habit, and the countless links in the sweet charities of home, had supplied that sympathy with the genial man which had been missed at first by the lonely scholar.

Next I thought of the grey, eagle-eyed old soldier,

with his ruined tower and barren acres,—and saw before me his proud, prejudiced, chivalrous boyhood, gliding through the ruins or poring over the mouldy pedigree. And this son, so disowned,—for what dark offence?—an awe crept over me. And this girl—his ewe-lamb——his all—was she fair? had she blue eyes like my mother, or a high Roman nose and beetle brows like Captain Roland? I mused, and mused, and mused—and the candle went out—and the moonlight grew broader and stiller; till at last I was sailing in a balloon with Uncle Jack, and had just tumbled into the Red Sea—when the well-known voice of nurse Primmins restored me to life with a "God bless my heart! the boy has not been in bed all this 'varsal night!"

CHAPTER IV.

As soon as I was dressed I hastened down stairs, for I longed to revisit my old haunts—the little plot of garden I had sown with anemones and cresses; the walk by the peach wall; the pond wherein I had angled for roach and perch.

Entering the hall, I discovered my Uncle Roland in a great state of embarrassment. The maid-servant was scrubbing the stones at the hall-door; she was naturally plump,—and it is astonishing how much more plump a female becomes when she is on all-fours!—the maid-servant, then, was scrubbing the stones, her face turned from the Captain; and the Captain, evidently meditating a sortie, stood ruefully gazing at the obstacle before him and hemming aloud. Alas, the maid-servant was deaf! I stopped, curious to see how Uncle Roland would extricate himself from the dilemma.

Finding that his hems were in vain, my uncle made himself as small as he could, and glided close to the left of the wall: at that instant, the maid turned abruptly round towards the right, and completely obstructed, by this manœuvre, the slight crevice through which hope had dawned on her captive. My uncle

stood stock-still,—and, to say the truth, he could not have stirred an inch without coming into personal contact with the rounded charms which blockaded his movements. My uncle took off his hat and scratched his forehead in great perplexity. Presently, by a slight turn of the flanks, the opposing party, while leaving him an opportunity of return, entirely precluded all chance of egress in that quarter. My uncle retreated in haste, and now presented himself to the right wing of the enemy. He had scarcely done so when, without looking behind her, the blockading party shoved aside the pail that crippled the range of her operations, and so placed it that it formed a formidable barricade, which my uncle's cork leg had no chance of surmounting. Therewith Captain Roland lifted his eyes appealingly to heaven, and I heard him distinctly ejaculate—

"Would to Heaven she were a creature in breeches!"

But happily at this moment the maid-servant turned her head sharply round, and, seeing the Captain, rose in an instant, moved away the pail, and dropped a frightened curtsy.

My Uncle Roland touched his hat, "I beg you a thousand pardons, my good girl," said he; and, with a half bow, he slid into the open air.

"You have a soldier's politeness, uncle," said I, tucking my arm into Captain Roland's.

"Tush, my boy," said he, smiling seriously, and colouring up to the temples; "tush, say a gentleman's! To us, sir, every woman is a lady, in right of her sex."

Now, I had often occasion later to recall that aphorism of my uncle's; and it served to explain to me how a man, so prejudiced on the score of family pride, never seemed to consider it an offence in my father to have married a woman whose pedigree was as brief as my dear mother's. Had she been a Montmorenci, my uncle could not have been more respectful and gallant than he was to that meek descendant of the Tibbetses. He held, indeed,—which I never knew any other man, vain of family, approve or support,—a doctrine deduced from the following syllogisms: 1st, That birth was not valuable in itself, but as a transmission of certain qualities which descent from a race of warriors should perpetuate—viz. truth, courage, honour; 2dly, That, whereas from the woman's side we derive our more intellectual faculties, from the man's we derive our moral; a clever and witty man generally has a clever and witty mother; a brave and honourable man, a brave and honourable father. Therefore, all the qualities which attention to race should perpetuate, are the manly qualities traceable only from the *father's* side. Again, he held that while the aristocracy have higher and more chivalrous notions, the people generally have shrewder and livelier ideas. Therefore, to prevent gentlemen from degenerating into complete dunderheads, an admixture with the people, provided always it was on the female side, was not only excusable, but expedient; and, finally, my uncle held, that, whereas a man is a rude, coarse, sensual animal, and requires all manner of associations to dignify and refine him, women are so

naturally susceptible of everything beautiful in sentiment, and generous in purpose, that she who is a true woman is a fit peer for a king. Odd and preposterous notions, no doubt, and capable of much controversy, so far as the doctrine of race (if that be any way tenable) is concerned ; but then the plain fact is, that my Uncle Roland was as eccentric and contradictory a gentleman —as—as—why, as you and I are, if we once venture to think for ourselves.

"Well, sir, and what profession are you meant for?" asked my uncle—"not the army, I fear?"

"I have never thought of the subject, uncle."

"Thank Heaven," said Captain Roland, "we have never yet had a lawyer in the family! nor a stockbroker, nor a tradesman—ahem!"

I saw that my great ancestor the printer suddenly rose up in that hem.

"Why, uncle, there are honourable men in all callings."

"Certainly, sir. But in all callings honour is not the first principle of action."

"But it may be, sir, if a man of honour pursue it! There are some soldiers who have been great rascals!"

My uncle looked posed, and his black brows met thoughtfully.

"You are right, boy, I dare say," he answered somewhat mildly. "But do you think that it ought to give me as much pleasure to look on my old ruined tower, if I knew it had been bought by some herring-dealer, like the first ancestor of the Poles, as I do now, when

I know it was given to a knight and gentleman (who traced his descent from an Anglo-Dane in the time of King Alfred), for services done in Aquitaine and Gascony, by Henry the Plantagenet? And do you mean to tell me that I should have been the same man if I had not from a boy associated that old tower with all ideas of what its owners were, and should be, as knights and gentlemen? Sir, you would have made a different being of me, if at the head of my pedigree you had clapped a herring-dealer; though I dare say, the herring-dealer might have been as good a man as ever the Anglo-Dane was! God rest him!"

"And for the same reason, I suppose, sir, that you think my father never would have been quite the same being he is, if he had not made that notable discovery touching our descent from the great William Caxton, the printer."

My uncle bounded as if he had been shot; bounded so incautiously, considering the materials of which one leg was composed, that he would have fallen into a strawberry-bed if I had not caught him by the arm.

"Why, you—you—you young jackanapes," cried the Captain, shaking me off as soon as he had regained his equilibrium. "You do not mean to inherit that infamous crotchet my brother has got into his head? You do not mean to exchange Sir William de Caxton, who fought and fell at Bosworth, for the mechanic who sold black-letter pamphlets in the Sanctuary at Westminster?"

"That depends on the evidence, uncle!"

"No, sir, like all noble truths, it depends upon *faith*. Men, nowadays," continued my uncle, with a look of ineffable disgust, "actually require that truths should be proved."

"It is a sad conceit on their part, no doubt, my dear uncle. But till a truth is proved, how can we know that it is a truth?"

I thought that in that very sagacious question I had effectually caught my uncle. Not I. He slipped through it like an eel.

"Sir," said he, "whatever, in Truth, makes a man's heart warmer, and his soul purer, is a belief, not a knowledge. Proof, sir, is a hand-cuff—belief is a wing! Want proof as to an ancestor in the reign of King Richard! Sir, you cannot even prove to the satisfaction of a logician that you are the son of your own father. Sir, a religious man does not want to reason about his religion—religion is not mathematics. Religion is to be felt, not proved. There are a great many things in the religion of a good man which are not in the catechism. Proof!" continued my uncle, growing violent—"Proof, sir, is a low, vulgar, levelling, rascally Jacobin—Belief is a loyal, generous, chivalrous gentleman! No, no,—prove what you please, you shall never rob me of one belief that has made me——"

"The finest-hearted creature that ever talked nonsense," said my father, who came up, like Horace's deity, at the right moment. "What is it you must believe in, brother, no matter what the proof against you?"

My uncle was silent, and with great energy dug the point of his cane into the gravel.

"He will not believe in our great ancestor the printer," said I, maliciously.

My father's calm brow was overcast in a moment.

"Brother," said the Captain loftily, "you have a right to your own ideas, but you should take care how they contaminate your child."

"Contaminate!" said my father; and for the first time I saw an angry sparkle flash from his eyes, but he checked himself on the instant: change the word, my dear brother."

"No, sir, I will not change it! To belie the records of the family!"

"Records! A brass plate in a village church against all the books of the College of Arms!"

"To renounce your ancestor, a knight who died in the field!"

"For the worst cause that man ever fought for!"

"On behalf of his king!"

"Who had murdered his nephews!"

"A knight! with our crest on his helmet."

"And no brains underneath it, or he would never have had them knocked out for so bloody a villain!"

"A rascally, drudging, money-making printer!"

"The wise and glorious introducer of the art that has enlightened a world. Prefer for an ancestor, to one whom scholar and sage never name but in homage, a worthless, obscure, jolter-headed booby in mail, whose

only record to men is a brass plate in a church in a village!"

My uncle turned round perfectly livid. "Enough, sir! enough! I am insulted sufficiently. I ought to have expected it. I wish you and your son a very good day."

My father stood aghast. The Captain was hobbling off to the iron gate; in another moment he would have been out of our precincts. I ran up and hung upon him. "Uncle, it is all my fault. Between you and me I am quite of your side; pray forgive us both. What could I have been thinking of, to vex you so? And my father, whom your visit has made so happy!"

My uncle paused, feeling for the latch of the gate. My father had now come up, and caught his hand. "What are all the printers that ever lived, and all the books they ever printed, to one wrong to thy fine heart, brother Roland? Shame on me! A bookman's weak point, you know! It is very true—I should never have taught the boy one thing to give you pain, brother Roland; though I don't remember," continued my father, with a perplexed look, "that I ever did teach it him either! Pisistratus, as you value my blessing, respect as your ancestor, Sir William de Caxton, the hero of Bosworth. Come, come, brother!"

"I am an old fool," said Uncle Roland, "whichever way we look at it. Ah, you young dog! you are laughing at us both!"

"I have ordered breakfast on the lawn," said my mother, coming out from the porch, with her cheerful

smile on her lips ; "and I think the devil will be done to your liking to-day, brother Roland."

"We have had enough of the devil already, my love," said my father, wiping his forehead.

So, while the birds sang overhead, or hopped familiarly across the sward for the crumbs thrown forth to them, while the sun was still cool in the east, and the leaves yet rustled with the sweet air of morning, we all sat down to our table, with hearts as reconciled to each other, and as peaceably disposed to thank God for the fair world around us, as if the river had never run red through the field of Bosworth, and the excellent Mr Caxton had never set all mankind by the ears with an irritating invention, a thousand times more provocative of our combative tendencies than the blast of the trumpet and the gleam of the banner !

CHAPTER V.

"BROTHER," said Mr Caxton, "I will walk with you to the Roman encampment."

The Captain felt that this proposal was meant as the greatest peace-offering my father could think of; for, 1st, it was a very long walk, and my father detested long walks; 2dly, it was the sacrifice of a whole day's labour at the Great Work. And yet, with that quick sensibility, which only the generous possess, Uncle Roland accepted at once the proposal. If he had not done so, my father would have had a heavier heart for a month to come. And how could the Great Work have got on while the author was every now and then disturbed by a twinge of remorse?

Half an hour after breakfast, the brothers set off arm-in-arm; and I followed, a little apart, admiring how sturdily the old soldier got over the ground, in spite of the cork leg. It was pleasant enough to listen to their conversation, and notice the contrasts between these two eccentric stamps from Dame Nature's ever-variable mould,—Nature who casts nothing in stereotype, for I do believe that not even two fleas can be found identically the same.

My father was not a quick or minute observer of rural beauties. He had so little of the organ of locality, that I suspect he could have lost his way in his own garden. But the Captain was exquisitely alive to external impressions—not a feature in the landscape escaped him. At every fantastic gnarled pollard he halted to gaze; his eye followed the lark soaring up from his feet; when a fresher air came from the hill-top, his nostrils dilated, as if voluptuously to inhale its delight. My father, with all his learning, and though his study had been in the stores of all language, was very rarely eloquent. The Captain had a glow and a passion in his words which, what with his deep, tremulous voice, and animated gestures, gave something poetic to half of what he uttered. In every sentence of Roland's, in every tone of his voice, and every play of his face, there was some outbreak of pride; but, unless you set him on his hobby of that great ancestor the printer, my father had not as much pride as a homœopathist could have put into a globule. He was not proud even of not being proud. Chafe all his feathers, and still you could rouse but a dove. My father was slow and mild, my uncle quick and fiery; my father reasoned, my uncle imagined; my father was very seldom wrong, my uncle never quite in the right; but, as my father once said of him, "Roland beats about the bush till he sends out the very bird that we went to search for. He is never in the wrong without suggesting to us what is the right." All in my uncle was stern, rough, and angular; all in my father was sweet, polished, and rounded into a natural grace. My uncle's character

cast out a multiplicity of shadows, like a Gothic pile in a northern sky. My father stood serene in the light, like a Greek temple at mid-day in a southern clime. Their persons corresponded with their natures. My uncle's high aquiline features, bronzed hue, rapid fire of eye, and upper lip that always quivered, were a notable contrast to my father's delicate profile, quiet, abstracted gaze, and the steady sweetness that rested on his musing smile. Roland's forehead was singularly high, and rose to a peak in the summit where phrenologists place the organ of veneration, but it was narrow and deeply furrowed. Augustine's might be as high, but then soft, silky hair waved carelessly over it—concealing its height, but not its vast breadth—on which not a wrinkle was visible. And yet, withal, there was a great family likeness between the two brothers. When some softer sentiment subdued him, Roland caught the very look of Augustine; when some high emotion animated my father, you might have taken him for Roland. I have often thought since, in the greater experience of mankind which life has afforded me, that if, in early years, their destinies had been exchanged—if Roland had taken to literature, and my father had been forced into action—that each would have had greater worldly success. For Roland's passion and energy would have given immediate and forcible effect to study; he might have been a historian or a poet. It is not study alone that produces a writer; it is *intensity*. In the mind, as in yonder chimney, to make the fire burn hot and quick, you must narrow the draught. Whereas, had my father

been forced into the practical world, his calm depth of comprehension, his clearness of reason, his general accuracy in such notions as he once entertained and pondered over, joined to a temper that crosses and losses could never ruffle, and utter freedom from vanity and self-love, from prejudice and passion, might have made him a very wise and enlightened counsellor in the great affairs of life—a lawyer, a diplomatist, a statesman, for what I know, even a great general—if his tender humanity had not stood in the way of his military mathematics.

But, as it was—with his slow pulse never stimulated by action, and too little stirred by even scholarly ambition—my father's mind went on widening and widening, till the circle was lost in the great ocean of contemplation; and Roland's passionate energy, fretted into fever by every let and hindrance, in the struggle with his kind—and narrowed more and more as it was curbed within the channels of active discipline and duty—missed its due career altogether; and what might have been the poet, contracted into the humorist.

Yet, who that had ever known ye, could have wished you other than ye were—ye guileless, affectionate, honest, simple creatures? simple both, in spite of all the learning of the one, all the prejudices, whims, irritabilities, and crotchets of the other? There you are—seated on the height of the old Roman camp, with a volume of the Stratagems of Polyœnus (or is it Frontinus?) open on my father's lap; the sheep grazing in the furrows of the circumvallations; the curious steer gazing at you where it halts in the space whence the

Roman cohorts glittered forth. And your boy-biographer standing behind you with folded arms; and,—as the scholar read or the soldier pointed his cane to each fancied post in the war,—filling up the pastoral landscape with the eagles of Agricola and the scythed cars of Boadicea!

CHAPTER VI.

"It is never the same two hours together in this country," said my Uncle Roland, as, after dinner, or rather after dessert, we joined my mother in the drawing-room.

Indeed, a cold drizzling rain had come on within the last two hours; and, though it was July, it was as chilly as if it had been October. My mother whispered to me, and I went out; in ten minutes more, the logs (for we live in a wood country) blazed merrily in the grate. Why could not my mother have rung the bell, and ordered the servant to light a fire? My dear reader, Captain Roland was poor, and he made a capital virtue of economy!

The two brothers drew their chairs near to the hearth, my father at the left, my uncle at the right; and I and my mother sat down to "Fox and geese."

Coffee came in—one cup for the Captain, for the rest of the party avoided that exciting beverage. And on that cup was a picture of—His Grace the Duke of Wellington!

During our visit to the Roman camp, my mother had borrowed Mr Squills' chaise, and driven over to

our market-town, for the express purpose of greeting the Captain's eyes with the face of his old chief.

My uncle changed colour, rose, lifted my mother's hand to his lips, and sat himself down again in silence.

"I have heard," said the Captain after a pause, "that the Marquess of Hastings, who is every inch a soldier and a gentleman—and that is saying not a little, for he measures seventy-five inches from the crown to the sole—when he received Louis XVIII. (then an exile) at Donnington, fitted up his apartments exactly like those his majesty had occupied at the Tuileries. It was a kingly attention (my lord Hastings, you know, is sprung from the Plantagenets), a kingly attention to a king. It cost some money and made some noise. A woman can show the same royal delicacy of heart in this bit of porcelain, and so quietly, that we men all think it a matter of course, brother Austin."

"You are such a worshipper of women, Roland, that it is melancholy to see you single. You must marry again !"

My uncle first smiled, then frowned, and lastly sighed somewhat heavily.

"Your time will pass slowly in your old tower, poor brother," continued my father, "with only your little girl for a companion."

"And the past !" said my uncle ; "the past, that mighty world"—

"Do you still read your old books of chivalry, Frois-

sart and the Chronicles, Palmerin of England and Amadis of Gaul?"

"Why," said my uncle, reddening, "I have tried to improve myself with studies a little more substantial. And" (he added with a sly smile) "there will be your great book for many a long winter to come."

"Um!" said my father, bashfully.

"Do you know," quoth my uncle, "that Dame Primmins is a very intelligent woman; full of fancy, and a capital story-teller?"

"Is not she, uncle?" cried I, leaving my fox in the corner. "Oh, if you could hear her tell the tale of King Arthur and the Enchanted Lake, or the Grim White Woman!"

"I have already heard her tell both," said my uncle.

"The deuce you have, brother! My dear, we must look to this. These captains are dangerous gentlemen in an orderly household. Pray, where could you have had the opportunity of such private communications with Mrs Primmins?"

"Once," said my uncle, readily, "when I went into her room, while she mended my stock; and once"—he stopped short, and looked down.

"Once when?—out with it."

"When she was warming my bed," said my uncle, in a half-whisper.

"Dear!" said my mother innocently, "that's how the sheets came by that bad hole in the middle. I thought it was the warming-pan."

"I am quite shocked!" faltered my uncle.

"You well may be," said my father. "A woman who has been heretofore above all suspicion! But, come," he said, seeing that my uncle looked sad, and was no doubt casting up the probable price of twice six yards of Holland—"but come, you were always a famous rhapsodist or tale-teller yourself. Come, Roland, let us have some story of your own; something which your experience has left strong in your impressions."

"Let us first have the candles," said my mother.

The candles were brought, the curtains let down—we all drew our chairs to the hearth. But, in the interval, my uncle had sunk into a gloomy reverie; and, when we called upon him to begin, he seemed to shake off with effort some recollections of pain.

"You ask me," he said, "to tell you some tale which my own experience has left deeply marked in my impressions—I will tell you one apart from my own life, but which has often haunted me. It is sad and strange, ma'am."

"Ma'am, *brother?*" said my mother reproachfully, letting her small hand drop upon that which, large and sunburnt, the Captain waved towards her as he spoke.

"Austin, you have married an angel!" said my uncle; and he was, I believe, the only brother-in-law who ever made so hazardous an assertion.

CHAPTER VII.

MY UNCLE ROLAND'S TALE.

"It was in Spain, no matter where or how, that it was my fortune to take prisoner a French officer of the same rank that I then held—a lieutenant; and there was so much similarity in our sentiments, that we became intimate friends—the most intimate friend I ever had, sister, out of this dear circle. He was a rough soldier, whom the world had not well treated; but he never railed at the world, and maintained that he had had his deserts. Honour was his idol, and the sense of honour paid him for the loss of all else.

"We were both at that time volunteers in a foreign service—in that worst of service, civil war—he on one side, I on the other,—both, perhaps, disappointed in the cause we had severally espoused. There was something similar, too, in our domestic relationships. He had a son—a boy—who was all in life to him, next to his country and his duty. I, too, had then such a son, though of fewer years." (The Captain paused an instant: we exchanged glances, and a stifling sensation of pain and suspense was felt by all his listeners.)

"We were accustomed, brother, to talk of these children —to picture their future, to compare our hopes and dreams. We hoped and dreamed alike. A short time sufficed to establish this confidence. My prisoner was sent to headquarters, and soon afterwards exchanged.

"We met no more till last year. Being then at Paris, I inquired for my old friend, and learned that he was living at R——, a few miles from the capital. I went to visit him. I found his house empty and deserted. That very day he had been led to prison, charged with a terrible crime. I saw him in that prison, and from his own lips learned his story. His son had been brought up, as he fondly believed, in the habits and principles of honourable men; and having finished his education, came to reside with him at R——. The young man was accustomed to go frequently to Paris. A young Frenchman loves pleasure, sister; and pleasure is found at Paris. The father thought it natural, and stripped his age of some comforts to supply luxuries to the son's youth.

"Shortly after the young man's arrival, my friend perceived that he was robbed. Moneys kept in his bureau were abstracted he knew not how, nor could guess by whom. It must be done in the night. He concealed himself, and watched. He saw a stealthy figure glide in, he saw a false key applied to the lock— he started forward, seized the felon, and recognised his son. What should the father have done? I do not ask *you*, sister! I ask these men, son and father, I ask you."

"Expelled him the house," cried I.

"Done his duty, and reformed the unhappy wretch," said my father. "*Nemo repente turpissimus semper fuit*—No man is wholly bad all at once."

"The father did as you would have advised, brother. He kept the youth; he remonstrated with him; he did more—he gave him the key of the bureau. 'Take what I have to give,' said he: 'I would rather be a beggar than know my son a thief.'"

"Right: and the youth repented, and became a good man?" exclaimed my father.

Captain Roland shook his head. "The youth promised amendment, and seemed penitent. He spoke of the temptations of Paris, the gaming-table, and what not. He gave up his daily visits to the capital. He seemed to apply to study. Shortly after this, the neighbourhood was alarmed by reports of night robberies on the road. Men, masked and armed, plundered travellers, and even broke into houses."

"The police were on the alert. One night an old brother officer knocked at my friend's door. It was late: the veteran (he was a cripple, by the way, like myself—strange coincidence!) was in bed. He came down in haste, when his servant woke, and told him that his old friend, wounded and bleeding, sought an asylum under his roof. The wound, however, was slight. The guest had been attacked and robbed on the road. The next morning the proper authority of the town was sent for. The plundered man described his loss—some *billets* of five hundred francs in a pocket-

book, on which was embroidered his name and coronet (he was a vicomte). The guest staid to dinner. Late in the forenoon, the son looked in. The guest started to see him : my friend noticed his paleness. Shortly after, on pretence of faintness, the guest retired to his room, and sent for his host. 'My friend,' said he, 'can you do me a favour ?—go to the magistrate and recall the evidence I have given.'

"'Impossible,' said the host. 'What crotchet is this ?'

"The guest shuddered. '*Peste !*' said he : 'I do not wish in my old age to be hard on others. Who knows how the robber may have been tempted, and who knows what relations he may have—honest men, whom his crime would degrade for ever ! Good heavens ! if detected, it is the galleys, the galleys !'

"'And what then ?—the robber knew what he braved.'

"'But did his father know it ?' cried the guest.

"A light broke upon my unhappy comrade in arms : he caught his friend by the hand—'You turned pale at my son's sight—where did you ever see him before ? Speak !'

"'Last night, on the road to Paris. The mask slipped aside. Call back my evidence !'

"'You are mistaken,' said my friend, calmly. 'I saw my son in his bed, and blessed him, before I went to my own.'

"'I will believe you,' said the guest ; 'and never shall my hasty suspicion pass my lips—but call back the evidence.'

"The guest returned to Paris before dusk. The father conversed with his son on the subject of his studies; he followed him to his room, waited till he was in bed, and was then about to retire, when the youth said, 'Father, you have forgotten your blessing.'

"The father went back, laid his hand on the boy's head and prayed. He was credulous—fathers are so! He was persuaded that his friend had been deceived. He retired to rest, and fell asleep. He woke suddenly in the middle of the night, and felt (I here quote his words)—'I felt,' said he, 'as if a voice had awakened me—a voice that said "Rise and search." I rose at once, struck a light, and went to my son's room. The door was locked. I knocked once, twice, thrice,—no answer. I dared not call aloud, lest I should rouse the servants. I went down the stairs—I opened the back-door—I passed to the stables. My own horse was there, *not* my son's. My horse neighed; it was old, like myself—my old charger at Mount St Jean. I stole back, I crept into the shadow of the wall by my son's door, and extinguished my light. I felt as if I were a thief myself."

"Brother," interrupted my mother under her breath, "speak in your own words, not in this wretched father's. I know not why, but it would shock me less."

The Captain nodded.

"Before daybreak, my friend heard the back-door open gently; a foot ascended the stair—a key grated in the door of the room close at hand—the father glided

through the dark into that chamber behind his unseen son.

"He heard the clink of the tinder-box; a light was struck; it spread over the room, but he had time to place himself behind the window-curtain which was close at hand. The figure before him stood a moment or so motionless, and seemed to listen, for it turned to the right, to the left, its visage covered with the black hideous mask which is worn in carnivals. Slowly the mask was removed; could that be his son's face? the son of a brave man?—it was pale and ghastly with scoundrel fears; the base drops stood on the brow; the eye was haggard and bloodshot. He looked as a coward looks when death stands before him.

"The youth walked, or rather skulked, to the secretaire, unlocked it, opened a secret drawer; placed within it the contents of his pockets and his frightful mask: the father approached softly, looked over his shoulder, and saw in the drawer the pocket-book embroidered with his friend's name. Meanwhile, the son took out his pistols, uncocked them cautiously, and was about also to secrete them when his father arrested his arm. 'Robber, the use of these is yet to come!'

"The son's knees knocked together, an exclamation for mercy burst from his lips; but when, recovering the mere shock of his dastard nerves, he perceived it was not the gripe of some hireling of the law, but a father's hand that had clutched his arm, the vile audacity which knows fear only from a bodily cause, none from the awe of shame, returned to him.

"'Tush, sir,' he said, 'waste not time in reproaches, for, I fear, the *gens-d'armes* are on my track. It is well that you are here; you can swear that I have spent the night at home. Unhand me, old man—I have these witnesses still to secrete,' and he pointed to the garments wet and bedabbled with the mud of the roads. He had scarcely spoken when the walls shook; there was the heavy clatter of hoofs on the ringing pavement without.

"'They come!' cried the son. 'Off, dotard! save your son from the galleys.'

"'The galleys, the galleys!' said the father, staggering back; 'it is true'—he said—'the galleys.'

"There was a loud knocking at the gate. The *gens-d'armes* surrounded the house. 'Open, in the name of the law.' No answer came, no door was opened. Some of the *gens-d'armes* rode to the rear of the house, in which was placed the stable-yard. From the window of the son's room, the father saw the sudden blaze of torches, the shadowy forms of the men-hunters. He heard the clatter of arms as they swung themselves from their horses. He heard a voice cry, 'Yes, this is the robber's grey horse—see, it still reeks with sweat!' And behind and in front, at either door, again came the knocking, and again the shout, 'Open, in the name of the law.'

"Then lights began to gleam from the casements of the neighbouring houses; then the space filled rapidly with curious wonderers startled from their sleep; the

world was astir, and the crowd came round to know what crime or what shame had entered the old soldier's home.

"Suddenly, within, there was heard the report of a fire-arm; and a minute or so afterwards the front door was opened, and the soldier appeared.

" 'Enter,' he said to the *gens-d'armes:* 'what would you?'

" 'We seek a robber who is within your walls.'

" 'I know it; mount and find him: I will lead the way.'

"He ascended the stairs, he threw open his son's room; the officers of justice poured in, and on the floor lay the robber's corpse.

"They looked at each other in amazement. 'Take what is left you,' said the father. 'Take the dead man rescued from the galleys; take the living man on whose hands rests the dead man's blood!'

"I was present at my friend's trial. The facts had become known beforehand. He stood there with his grey hair, and his mutilated limbs, and the deep scar on his visage, and the cross of the Legion of Honour on his breast; and when he had told his tale, he ended with these words—'I have saved the son whom I reared for France from a doom that would have spared the life to brand it with disgrace. Is this a crime? I give you my life in exchange for my son's disgrace. Does my country need a victim? I have lived for my country's glory, and I can die contented to satisfy its laws; sure that, if you blame me, you will not despise;

sure that the hands that give me to the headsman will scatter flowers over my grave. Thus I confess all. I, a soldier, look round amongst a nation of soldiers; and in the name of the star which glitters on my breast, I dare the Fathers of France to condemn me!'

"They acquitted the soldier—at least they gave a verdict answering to what in our courts is called 'justifiable homicide.' A shout rose in the court which no ceremonial voice could still; the crowd would have borne him in triumph to his house, but his look repelled such vanities. To his house he returned indeed, and the day afterwards they found him dead, beside the cradle in which his first prayer had been breathed over his sinless child. Now, father and son, I ask you, do you condemn that man?"

CHAPTER VIII.

My father took three strides up and down the room, and then, halting on his hearth, and facing his brother, he thus spoke—"I condemn his deed, Roland! At best he was but a haughty egotist. I understand why Brutus should slay his sons. By that sacrifice he saved his country! What did this poor dupe of an exaggeration save?—nothing but his own name. He could not lift the crime from his son's soul, nor the dishonour from his son's memory. He could but gratify his own vain pride; and, insensibly to himself, his act was whispered to him by the fiend that ever whispers to the heart of man, 'Dread men's opinions more than God's law!' Oh, my dear brother, what minds like yours should guard against the most is not the meanness of evil—it is the evil that takes false nobility, by garbing itself in the royal magnificence of good." My uncle walked to the window, opened it, looked out a moment, as if to draw in fresh air, closed it gently, and came back again to his seat; but during the short time the window had been left open, a moth flew in.

"Tales like these," renewed my father, pityingly—"whether told by some great tragedian, or in thy

simple style, my brother,—tales like these have their uses: they penetrate the heart to make it wiser; but all wisdom is meek, my Roland. They invite us to put the question to ourselves that thou hast asked—'Can we condemn this man?' and reason answers, as I have answered—'We pity the man, we condemn the deed.' We——take care, my love! that moth will be in the candle. We——*whish!—whish!—*" and my father stopped to drive away the moth. My uncle turned, and taking his handkerchief from the lower part of his face, of which he had wished to conceal the workings, he flapped away the moth from the flame. My mother moved the candles from the moth. I tried to catch the moth in my father's straw-hat. The deuce was in the moth! it baffled us all, now circling against the ceiling, now sweeping down at the fatal lights. As if by a simultaneous impulse, my father approached one candle, my uncle approached the other; and just as the moth was wheeling round and round, irresolute which to choose for its funeral pyre, both candles were put out. The fire had burned down low in the grate, and in the sudden dimness my father's soft sweet voice came forth, as if from an invisible being: "We leave ourselves in the dark to save a moth from the flame, brother! shall we do less for our fellow-men? Extinguish, oh! humanely extinguish the light of our reason, when the darkness more favours our mercy." Before the lights were relit, my uncle had left the room. His brother followed him; my mother and I drew near to each other and talked in whispers.

PART FOURTH.

CHAPTER I.

I WAS always an early riser. Happy the man who is! Every morning, day comes to him with a virgin's love, full of bloom, and purity, and freshness. The youth of Nature is contagious, like the gladness of a happy child. I doubt if any man can be called "old" so long as he is an early riser, and an early *walker*. And oh, Youth!—take my word of it—youth in dressing-gown and slippers, dawdling over breakfast at noon, is a very decrepit ghastly image of that youth which sees the sun blush over the mountains, and the dews sparkle upon blossoming hedgerows.

Passing by my father's study, I was surprised to see the windows unclosed—surprised more, on looking in, to see him bending over his books—for I had never before known him study till after the morning meal. Students are not usually early risers, for students, alas! whatever their age, are rarely young. Yes; the Great Book must be getting on in serious earnest. It was no longer dalliance with learning: this was work.

I passed through the gates into the road. A few of the cottages were giving signs of returning life; but it was not yet the hour for labour, and no "Good morning, sir," greeted me on the road. Suddenly at a turn, which an over-hanging beech-tree had before concealed, I came full upon my Uncle Roland.

"What! you, sir? So early? Hark, the clock is striking five!"

"Not later! I have walked well for a lame man. It must be more than four miles to —— and back."

"You have been to ——: not on business? No soul would be up."

"Yes, at inns, there is always some one up. Ostlers never sleep! I have been to order my humble chaise and pair. I leave you to-day, nephew."

"Ah, uncle, we have offended you. It was my folly, that cursed print—"

"Pooh!" said my uncle, quickly. "Offended me, boy! I defy you!" and he pressed my hand roughly.

"Yet this sudden determination! It was but yesterday, at the Roman Camp, that you planned an excursion with my father, to C—— Castle."

"Never depend upon a whimsical man. I must be in London to-night."

"And return to-morrow?"

"I know not when," said my uncle, gloomily; and he was silent for some moments. At length, leaning less lightly on my arm, he continued—"Young man, you have pleased me. I love that open, saucy brow of yours, on which Nature has written, 'Trust me.' I

love those clear eyes, that look one manfully in the face. I must know more of you—much of you. You must come and see me some day or other in your ancestors' ruined keep."

"Come! that I will. And you shall show me the old tower—"

"And the traces of the outworks!" cried my uncle, flourishing his stick.

"And the pedigree—"

"Ay, and your great-great grandfather's armour, which he wore at Marston Moor——"

"Yes, and the brass plate in the church, uncle."

"The deuce is in the boy! Come here, come here; I've three minds to break your head, sir!"

"It is a pity somebody had not broken the rascally printer's, before he had the impudence to disgrace us by having a family, uncle."

Captain Roland tried hard to frown, but he could not. "Pshaw!" said he, stopping, and taking snuff. "The world of the dead is wide; why should the ghosts jostle us?"

"We can never escape the ghosts, uncle. They haunt us always. We cannot think or act, but the soul of some man, who has lived before, points the way. The dead never die, especially since——"

"Since what, boy?—you speak well."

"Since our great ancestor introduced printing," said I, majestically.

My uncle whistled, "*Malbrouk se'n va-t-en guerre.*"

I had not the heart to plague him further.

"Peace!" said I, creeping cautiously within the circle of the stick.

"No! I forewarn you—"

"Peace! and describe to me my little cousin, your pretty daughter—for pretty I am sure she is."

"Peace," said my uncle, smiling. "But you must come and judge for yourself."

CHAPTER II.

Uncle Roland was gone. Before he went, he was closeted for an hour with my father, who then accompanied him to the gate; and we all crowded round him as he stepped into his chaise. When the Captain was gone, I tried to sound my father as to the cause of so sudden a departure. But my father was impenetrable in all that related to his brother's secrets. Whether or not the Captain had ever confided to him the cause of his displeasure with his son—a mystery which much haunted me—my father was mute on that score, both to my mother and myself. For two or three days, however, Mr Caxton was evidently unsettled. He did not even take to his Great Work, but walked much alone, or accompanied only by the duck, and without even a book in his hand. But by degrees the scholarly habits returned to him; my mother mended his pens, and the work went on.

For my part, left much to myself, especially in the mornings, I began to muse restlessly over the future. Ungrateful that I was, the happiness of home ceased to content me. I heard afar the roar of the great world, and roved impatient by the shore.

At length, one evening, my father, with some modest hums and ha's, and an unaffected blush on his fair forehead, gratified a prayer frequently urged on him, and read me some portions of the Great Work. I cannot express the feelings this lecture created—they were something akin to awe. For the design of this book was so immense—and towards its execution a learning so vast and various had administered—that it seemed to me as if a spirit had opened to me a new world, which had always been before my feet, but which my own human blindness had hitherto concealed from me. The unspeakable patience with which all these materials have been collected, year after year—the ease with which now, by the calm power of genius, they seemed of themselves to fall into harmony and system—the unconscious humility with which the scholar exposed the stores of a laborious life;—all combined to rebuke my own restlessness and ambition, while they filled me with a pride in my father, which saved my wounded egotism from a pang. Here, indeed, was one of those books which embrace an existence; like the Dictionary of Bayle, or the History of Gibbon, or the *Fasti Hellenici* of Clinton, it was a book to which thousands of books had contributed, only to make the originality of the single mind more bold and clear. Into the furnace all vessels of gold, of all ages, had been cast; but from the mould came the new coin, with its single stamp. And happily, the subject of the work did not forbid to the writer the indulgence of his *naïve*, peculiar irony of humour—so quiet, yet

so profound. My father's book was the "History of Human Error." It was, therefore, the moral history of mankind, told with truth and earnestness, yet with an arch, unmalignant smile. Sometimes, indeed, the smile drew tears. But in all true humour lies its germ, pathos. Oh! by the goddess Moria or Folly, but he was at home in his theme! He viewed man first in the savage state, preferring in this the positive accounts of voyagers and travellers, to the vague myths of antiquity, and the dreams of speculators on our pristine state. From Australia and Abyssinia he drew pictures of mortality unadorned, as lively as if he had lived amongst Bushmen and savages all his life. Then he crossed over the Atlantic, and brought before you the American Indian, with his noble nature, struggling into the dawn of civilisation, when friend Penn cheated him out of his birthright, and the Anglo-Saxon drove him back into darkness. He showed both analogy and contrast between this specimen of our kind, and others equally apart from the extremes of the savage state and the cultured. The Arab in his tent, the Teuton in his forests, the Greenlander in his boat, the Fin in his reindeer car. Up sprang the rude gods of the north, and the resuscitated Druidism, passing from its earliest templeless belief into the later corruptions of crommell and idol. Up sprang, by their side, the Saturn of the Phœnicians, the mystic Budh of India, the elementary deities of the Pelasgian, the Naith and Serapis of Egypt, the Ormuzd of Persia, the Bel of Babylon, the winged genii of the graceful Etruria.

How nature and life shaped the religion; how the religion shaped the manners; how, and by what influences, some tribes were formed for progress; how others were destined to remain stationary, or be swallowed up in war and slavery by their brethren, was told with a precision clear and strong as the voice of Fate. Not only an antiquarian and philologist, but an anatomist and philosopher—my father brought to bear on all these grave points the various speculations involved in the distinction of races. He showed how race in perfection is produced, up to a certain point, by admixture; how all mixed races have been the most intelligent—how, in proportion as local circumstance and religious faith permitted the early fusion of different tribes, races improved and quickened into the refinements of civilisation. He tracked the progress and dispersion of the Hellenes, from their mythical cradle in Thessaly; and showed how those who settled near the sea-shores, and were compelled into commerce and intercourse with strangers, gave to Greece her marvellous accomplishments in arts and letters—the flowers of the ancient world. How others, like the Spartans, dwelling evermore in a camp, on guard against their neighbours, and rigidly preserving their Dorian purity of extraction, contributed neither artists, nor poets, nor philosophers to the golden treasure-house of mind. He took the old race of the Celts, Cimry, or Cimmerians. He compared the Celt who, as in Wales, the Scotch Highlands, in Bretagne, and in uncomprehended Ireland, retains his old characteristics and

purity of breed, with the Celt whose blood, mixed by a thousand channels, dictates from Paris the manners and revolutions of the world. He compared the Norman in his ancient Scandinavian home, with that wonder of intelligence and chivalry into which he grew, fusèd imperceptibly with the Frank, the Goth, and the Anglo-Saxon. He compared the Saxon, stationary in the land of Horsa, with the colonist and civiliser of the globe, as he becomes, when he knows not through what channels—French, Flemish, Danish, Welsh, Scotch, and Irish—he draws his sanguine blood. And out from all these speculations, to which I do such hurried and scanty justice, he drew the blessed truth, that carries hope to the land of the Caffre, the hut of the Bushman—that there is nothing in the flattened skull and the ebon aspect that rejects God's law—improvement; that by the same principle which raises the dog, the lowest of the animals in its savage state, to the highest after man—viz. admixture of race—you can elevate into nations of majesty and power the outcasts of humanity, now your compassion or your scorn. But when my father got into the marrow of his theme—when, quitting these preliminary discussions, he fell pounce amongst the would-be wisdom of the wise; when he dealt with civilisation itself, its schools, and porticos, and academies; when he bared the absurdities couched beneath the colleges of the Egyptians, and the Symposia of the Greeks; when he showed that, even in their own favourite pursuit of metaphysics, the Greeks were

children; and, in their own more practical region of politics, the Romans were visionaries and bunglers;—when, following the stream of error through the Middle Ages, he quoted the puerilities of Agrippa, the crudities of Cardan, and passed, with his calm smile, into the *salons* of the chattering wits of Paris in the eighteenth century, oh! then his irony was that of Lucian, sweetened by the gentle spirit of Erasmus. For not even here was my father's satire of the cheerless and Mephistophelian school. From this record of error he drew forth the grand eras of truth. He showed how earnest men never think in vain, though their thoughts may be errors. He proved how, in vast cycles, age after age, the human mind marches on—like the ocean, receding here, but there advancing: how from the speculations of the Greek sprang all true philosophy; how from the institutions of the Roman rose all durable systems of government; how from the robust follies of the north came the glory of chivalry, and the modern delicacies of honour, and the sweet harmonising influences of woman. He tracked the ancestry of our Sidneys and Bayards from the Hengists, Genserics, and Attilas. Full of all curious and quaint anecdote—of original illustration—of those niceties of learning which spring from a taste cultivated to the last exquisite polish—the book amused, and allured, and charmed; and erudition lost its pedantry now in the simplicity of Montaigne, now in the penetration of La Bruyère. He lived in each time of which he wrote, and the time lived again in him. Ah! what a writer

of romances he would have been, if—if what? If he had had as sad an experience of men's passions, as he had the happy intuition into their humours. But he who would see the mirror of the shore, must look where it is cast on the river, not the ocean. The narrow stream reflects the gnarled tree, and the pausing herd, and the village spire, and the romance of the landscape; but the sea reflects only the vast outline of the headland, and the lights of the eternal heaven.

CHAPTER III.

"It is Lombard Street to a china orange," quoth Uncle Jack.

"Are the odds in favour of fame against failure so great? You do not speak, I fear, from experience, brother Jack," answered my father as he stooped down to tickle the duck under the left ear.

"But Jack Tibbetts is not Augustine Caxton. Jack Tibbetts is not a scholar, a genius, a wond——"

"Stop!" cried my father.

"After all," said Mr Squills, "though I am no flatterer, Mr Tibbetts is not so far out. That part of your book which compares the crania, or skulls of the different races, is superb. Lawrence or Dr Prichard could not have done the thing more neatly. Such a book must not be lost to the world; and I agree with Mr Tibbetts that you should publish as soon as possible."

"It is one thing to write and another to publish," said my father, irresolutely. "When one considers all the great men who have published; when one thinks one is going to intrude one's-self audaciously into the company of Aristotle and Bacon, of Locke, of Herder—

of all the grave philosophers who bend over Nature with brows weighty with thought—one may well pause, and ——"

"Pooh!" interrupted Uncle Jack; "science is not a club, it is an ocean: it is open to the cockboat as the frigate. One man carries across it a freightage of ingots, another may fish there for herrings. Who can exhaust the sea? who say to intellect, 'The deeps of philosophy are preoccupied?'"

"Admirable!" cried Squills.

"So it is really your advice, my friends," said my father, who seemed struck by Uncle Jack's eloquent illustrations, "that I should desert my household gods, remove to London, since my own library ceases to supply my wants; take lodgings near the British Museum, and finish off one volume, at least, incontinently."

"It is a duty you owe to your country," said Uncle Jack, solemnly.

"And to yourself," urged Squills. "One must attend to the natural evacuations of the brain. Ah! you may smile, sir; but I have observed that if a man has much in his head, he must give it vent, or it oppresses him; the whole system goes wrong. From being abstracted, he grows stupefied. The weight of the pressure affects the nerves. I would not even guarantee you from a stroke of paralysis."

"Oh, Austin!" cried my mother tenderly, and throwing her arms round my father's neck.

"Come, sir, you are conquered," said I.

"And what is to become of you, Sisty?" asked my father. "Do you go with us, and unsettle your mind for the university?"

"My uncle has invited me to his castle; and in the meanwhile I will stay here, fag hard, and take care of the duck."

"All alone?" said my mother.

"No. All alone! Why, Uncle Jack will come here as often as ever, I hope."

Uncle Jack shook his head.

"No, my boy—I must go to town with your father. You don't understand these things. I shall see the booksellers for him. I know how these gentlemen are to be dealt with. I shall prepare the literary circles for the appearance of the book. In short, it is a sacrifice of interest, I know. My Journal will suffer. But friendship and my country's good before all things."

"Dear Jack!" said my mother affectionately.

"I cannot suffer it," cried my father. "You are making a good income. You are doing well where you are; and as to seeing the booksellers—why, when the work is ready, you can come to town for a week, and settle that affair."

"Poor dear Austin!" said Uncle Jack, with an air of superiority and compassion. "A week! Sir, the advent of a book that is to succeed requires the preparation of months. Pshaw! I am no genius, but I am a practical man. I know what's what. Leave me alone."

But my father continued obstinate, and Uncle Jack at last ceased to urge the matter. The journey to fame and London was now settled; but my father would not hear of my staying behind.

No; Pisistratus must needs go also to town and see the world; the duck would take care of itself.

CHAPTER IV.

We had taken the precaution to send, the day before, to secure our due complement of places—four in all (including one for Mrs Primmins)—in, or upon, the fast family coach called the Sun, which had lately been set up for the special convenience of the neighbourhood.

This luminary, rising in a town about seven miles distant from us, described at first a very erratic orbit amidst the contiguous villages, before it finally struck into the high-road of enlightenment, and thence performed its journey, in the full eyes of man, at the majestic pace of six miles and a half an hour. My father, with his pockets full of books, and a quarto of "Gebelin on the Primitive World," for light reading, under his arm; my mother with a little basket, containing sandwiches, and biscuits of her own baking; Mrs Primmins, with a new umbrella purchased for the occasion, and a birdcage containing a canary, endeared to her not more by song than age, and a severe pip through which she had successfully nursed it—and I myself, waited at the gates to welcome the celestial visitor. The gardener, with a wheelbarrow full of

boxes and portmanteaus, stood a little in the van; and the footman, who was to follow when lodgings had been found, had gone to a rising eminence to watch the dawning of the expected Sun, and apprise us of its approach by the concerted signal of a handkerchief fixed to a stick.

The quaint old house looked at us mournfully from all its deserted windows. The litter before its threshold and in its open hall; wisps of straw or hay that had been used for packing; baskets and boxes that had been examined and rejected; others, corded and piled, reserved to follow with the footman—and the two heated and hurried serving-women left behind standing half-way between house and garden-gate, whispering to each other, and looking as if they had not slept for weeks—gave to a scene, usually so trim and orderly, an aspect of pathetic abandonment and desolation. The Genius of the place seemed to reproach us. I felt the omens were against us, and turned my earnest gaze from the haunts behind with a sigh, as the coach now drew up with all its grandeur. An important personage, who, despite the heat of the day, was enveloped in a vast superfluity of belcher, in the midst of which galloped a gilt fox, and who rejoiced in the name of "guard," descended to inform us politely, that only three places, two inside and one out, were at our disposal, the rest having been pre-engaged a fortnight before our orders were received.

Now, as I knew that Mrs Primmins was indispensable to the comforts of my honoured parents (the more so, as

she had once lived in London, and knew all its ways), I suggested that she should take the outside seat, and that I should perform the journey on foot—a primitive mode of transport, which has its charms to a young man with stout limbs and gay spirits. The guard's outstretched arm left my mother little time to oppose this proposition, to which my father assented with a silent squeeze of the hand. And, having promised to join them at a family hotel near the Strand, to which Mr Squills had recommended them as peculiarly genteel and quiet, and waved my last farewell to my poor mother, who continued to stretch her meek face out of the window till the coach was whirled off in a cloud like one of the Homeric heroes, I turned within, to put up a few necessary articles in a small knapsack, which I remembered to have seen in the lumber-room, and which had appertained to my maternal grandfather; and with that on my shoulder, and a strong staff in my hand, I set off towards the great city at as brisk a pace as if I were only bound to the next village. Accordingly, about noon I was both tired and hungry; and seeing by the wayside one of those pretty inns yet peculiar to England, but which, thanks to the railways, will soon be amongst the things before the Flood, I sat down at a table under some clipped limes, unbuckled my knapsack, and ordered my simple fare with the dignity of one who, for the first time in his life, bespeaks his own dinner, and pays for it out of his own pocket.

While engaged on a rasher of bacon and a tankard of what the landlord called "No mistake," two pedestrians,

passing the same road which I had traversed, paused, cast a simultaneous look at my occupation, and induced no doubt by its allurements, seated themselves under the same lime-trees, though at the farther end of the table. I surveyed the new-comers with the curiosity natural to my years.

The elder of the two might have attained the age of thirty, though sundry deep lines, and hues formerly florid and now faded, speaking of fatigue, care, or dissipation, might have made him look somewhat older than he was. There was nothing very prepossessing in his appearance. He was dressed with a pretension ill suited to the costume appropriate to a foot-traveller. His coat was pinched and padded; two enormous pins, connected by a chain, decorated a very stiff stock of blue satin, dotted with yellow stars; his hands were cased in very dingy gloves, which had once been straw-coloured, and the said hands played with a whalebone cane surmounted by a formidable knob, which gave it the appearance of a "life-preserver." As he took off a white napless hat, which he wiped with great care and affection with the sleeve of his right arm, a profusion of stiff curls instantly betrayed the art of man. Like my landlord's ale, in that wig there was "no mistake:" it was brought (after the fashion of the wigs we see in the popular effigies of George IV. in his youth) low over his forehead and was raised at the top. The wig had been oiled, and the oil had imbibed no small quantity of dust; oil and dust had alike left their impression on the forehead and cheeks of the wig's proprietor. For the

rest, the expression of his face was somewhat impudent and reckless, but not without a certain drollery in the corners of his eyes.

The younger man was apparently about my own age, a year or two older perhaps—judging rather from his set and sinewy frame than his boyish countenance. And this last, boyish as it was, could not fail to demand the attention even of the most careless observer. It had not only the darkness, but the character of the gipsy face, with large brilliant eyes, raven hair, long and wavy, but not curling; the features were aquiline, but delicate, and when he spoke he showed teeth dazzling as pearls. It was impossible not to admire the singular beauty of the countenance; and yet, it had that expression, at once stealthy and fierce, which war with society has stamped upon the lineaments of the race of which it reminded me. But, withal, there was somewhat of the air of a gentleman in this young wayfarer. His dress consisted of a black velveteen shooting-jacket, or rather short frock, with a broad leathern strap at the waist, loose white trousers, and a foraging cap, which he threw carelessly on the table as he wiped his brow. Turning round impatiently, and with some haughtiness, from his companion, he surveyed me with a quick, observant flash of his piercing eyes, and then stretched himself at length on the bench, and appeared either to dose or muse, till, in obedience to his companion's orders, the board was spread with all the cold meats the larder could supply.

"Beef!" said his companion, screwing a pinchbeck

glass into his right eye. "Beef;—mottled, cowey—humph! Lamb;—oldish—rawish—muttony—humph! Pie;—stalish. Veal?—no, pork. Ah! what will you have?"

"Help yourself," replied the young man peevishly, as he sat up, looked disdainfully at the viands, and, after a long pause, tasted first one, then the other, with many shrugs of the shoulders and muttered exclamations of discontent. Suddenly he looked up, and called for brandy; and, to my surprise, and I fear admiration, he drank nearly half a tumblerful of that poison undiluted, with a composure that spoke of habitual use.

"Wrong!" said his companion, drawing the bottle to himself, and mixing the alcohol in careful proportions with water. "Wrong! coats of stomach soon wear out with that kind of clothes-brush. Better stick to the 'yeasty foam,' as sweet Will says. That young gentleman sets you a good example," and therewith the speaker nodded at me familiarly. Inexperienced as I was, I surmised at once that it was his intention to make acquaintance with the neighbour thus saluted. I was not deceived. "Anything to tempt *you*, sir?" asked this social personage after a short pause, and describing a semicircle with the point of his knife.

"I thank you, sir, but I have dined."

"What then? 'Break out into a second course of mischief,' as the swan recommends—swan of Avon, sir! No? 'Well, then, I charge you with this sup of sack.' Are you going far, if I may take the liberty to ask?"

"To London."

"Oh!" said the traveller—while his young companion lifted his eyes; and I was again struck with their remarkable penetration and brilliancy.

"London is the best place in the world for a lad of spirit. See life there; 'glass of fashion and mould of form.' Fond of the play, sir?"

"I never saw one."

"Possible!" cried the gentleman, dropping the handle of his knife, and bringing up the point horizontally: "then, young man," he added solemnly, "you have—but I won't say what you have to see. I won't say—no, not if you could cover this table with golden guineas, and exclaim with the generous ardour so engaging in youth, 'Mr Peacock, these are yours if you will only say what I have to see!'"

I laughed outright—may I be forgiven for the boast, but I had the reputation at school of a pleasant laugh. The young man's face grew dark at the sound: he pushed back his plate and sighed.

"Why," continued his friend, "my companion here, who, I suppose, is about your own age, he could tell you what a play is—he could tell you what life is. He has viewed the manners of the town: 'perused the traders,' as the swan poetically remarks. Have you not, my lad, eh?"

Thus directly appealed to, the boy looked up with a smile of scorn on his lips—

"Yes, I know what life is, and I say that life, like poverty, has strange bed-fellows. Ask me what life is

now, and I say a melodrama; ask me what it is twenty years hence, and I shall say——"

"A farce?" put in his comrade.

"No, a tragedy—or comedy as Molière wrote it."

"And how is that?" I asked, interested and somewhat surprised at the tone of my contemporary.

"Where the play ends in the triumph of the wittiest rogue. My friend here has no chance!"

"'Praise from Sir Hubert Stanley,' hem—yes, Hal Peacock may be witty, but he is no rogue."

"That was not exactly my meaning," said the boy drily.

"'A fico for your meaning,' as the swan says.—Hallo, you sir! Bully Host, clear the table,—fresh tumblers—hot water—sugar—lemon,—and——the bottle's out! Smoke, sir?" and Mr Peacock offered me a cigar.

Upon my refusal, he carefully twirled round a very uninviting specimen of some fabulous havannah—moistened it all over, as a boa-constrictor may do the ox he prepares for deglutition; bit off one end, and lighting the other from a little machine for that purpose which he drew from his pocket, he was soon absorbed in a vigorous effort (which the damp inherent in the weed long resisted) to poison the surrounding atmosphere. Therewith the young gentleman, either from emulation or in self-defence, extracted from his own pouch a cigar-case of notable elegance,—being of velvet, embroidered apparently by some fair hand, for "From Juliet" was very legibly worked thereon—selected a

cigar of better appearance than that in favour with his comrade, and seemed quite as familiar with the tobacco as he had been with the brandy.

"Fast, sir—fast lad that," quoth Mr Peacock, in the short gasps which his resolute struggle with his uninviting victim alone permitted—"nothing but (puff, puff) your true (suck, suck) syl—syl—sylva—does for him. Out, by the Lord! 'the jaws of darkness have devoured it up;'" and again Mr Peacock applied to his phosphoric machine. This time patience and perseverance succeeded, and the heart of the cigar responded by a dull red spark (leaving the sides wholly untouched) to the indefatigable ardour of its wooer.

This feat accomplished, Mr Peacock exclaimed triumphantly, "And now, what say you, my lads, to a game at cards?—three of us—whist and a dummy—nothing better—eh?" As he spoke he produced from his coat pocket a red silk handkerchief, a bunch of keys, a nightcap, a tooth-brush, a piece of shaving-soap, four lumps of sugar, the remains of a bun, a razor, and a pack of cards. Selecting the last, and returning its motley accompaniments to the abyss whence they had emerged, he turned up, with a jerk of his thumb and finger, the knave of clubs, and placing it on the top of the rest, slapped the cards emphatically on the table.

"You are very good, but I don't know whist," said I.

"Not know whist—not been to a play—not smoke! Then pray tell me, young man," said he majestically, and with a frown, "what on earth you *do* know?"

Much consternated by this direct appeal, and greatly ashamed of my ignorance of the cardinal points of erudition in Mr Peacock's estimation, I hung my head and looked down.

"That is right," renewed Mr Peacock more benignly; "you have the ingenuous shame of youth. It is promising, sir—'lowliness is young ambition's ladder,' as the swan says. Mount the first step, and learn whist—sixpenny points to begin with."

Notwithstanding any newness in actual life, I had had the good-fortune to learn a little of the way before me, by those much slandered guides called novels—works which are often to the inner world what maps are to the outer; and sundry recollections of "Gil Blas" and the "Vicar of Wakefield" came athwart me. I had no wish to emulate the worthy Moses, and felt that I might not have even the shagreen spectacles to boast of in my negotiations with this new Mr Jenkinson. Accordingly, shaking my head, I called for my bill. As I took out my purse—knit by my mother—with one gold piece in one corner, and sundry silver ones in the other, I saw that the eyes of Mr Peacock twinkled.

"Poor spirit, sir! poor spirit, young man! 'This avarice sticks deep,' as the swan beautifully observes. 'Nothing venture, nothing have.'"

"Nothing have, nothing venture," I returned, plucking up spirit.

"Nothing have!—Young sir, do you doubt my solidity—my capital—my 'golden joys?'"

"Sir, I spoke of myself. I am not rich enough to gamble."

"Gamble!" exclaimed Mr Peacock, in virtuous indignation—"Gamble! what do you mean, sir? You insult me!" and he rose threateningly, and clapped his white hat on his wig.

"Pshaw! let him alone, Hal," said the boy contemptuously. "Sir, if he is impertinent, thrash him." (This was to me.)

"Impertinent!—thrash!" exclaimed Mr Peacock, waxing very red; but catching the sneer on his companion's lip, he sat down, and subsided into sullen silence.

Meanwhile I paid my bill. This duty, rarely a cheerful one, performed, I looked round for my knapsack, and perceived that it was in the boy's hands. He was very coolly reading the address which, in case of accidents, I prudently placed on it—"Pisistratus Caxton, Esq., —— Hotel, —— Street, Strand."

I took my knapsack from him, more surprised at such a breach of good manners in a young gentleman who knew life so well, than I should have been at a similar error on the part of Mr Peacock. He made no apology, but nodded farewell, and stretched himself at full length on the bench. Mr Peacock, now absorbed in a game of patience, vouchsafed no return to my parting salutation, and in another moment I was alone on the high-road. My thoughts turned long upon the young man I had left: mixed with a sort of instinctive compassionate foreboding of an ill future for one with such

habits, and in such companionship, I felt an involuntary admiration, less even for his good looks than his ease, audacity, and the careless superiority he assumed over a comrade so much older than himself.

The day was far gone when I saw the spires of a town at which I intended to rest for the night. The horn of a coach behind made me turn my head, and as the vehicle passed me, I saw on the outside Mr Peacock, still struggling with a cigar—it could scarcely be the same—and his young friend stretched on the roof amongst the luggage, leaning his handsome head on his hand, and apparently unobservant both of me and every one else.

CHAPTER V.

I AM apt—judging egotistically, perhaps from my own experience—to measure a young man's chance of what is termed practical success in life, by what may seem at first two very vulgar qualities—viz. his inquisitiveness and his animal vivacity. A curiosity which springs forward to examine everything new to his information—a nervous activity approaching to restlessness, which rarely allows bodily fatigue to interfere with some object in view—constitute, in my mind, very profitable stock-in-hand to begin the world with.

Tired as I was, after I had performed my ablutions, and refreshed myself in the little coffee-room of the inn at which I put up, with the pedestrian's best beverage, familiar and oft-calumniated tea, I could not resist the temptation of the broad, bustling street, which, lighted with gas, shone on me through the dim windows of the coffee-room. I had never before seen a large town, and the contrast of lamp-lit, busy night in the streets, with sober, deserted night in the lanes and fields, struck me forcibly.

I sauntered out, therefore, jostling and jostled, now gazing at the windows, now hurried along the tide of life, till I found myself before a cook-shop, round which

clustered a small knot of housewives, citizens, and hungry-looking children. While contemplating this group, and marvelling how it comes to pass that the staple business of earth's majority is how, when, and where to eat, my ear was struck with "'In Troy there lies the scene,' as the illustrious Will remarks."

Looking round, I perceived Mr Peacock pointing his stick towards an open doorway next to the cook-shop, the hall beyond which was lighted with gas, while, painted in black letters on a pane of glass over the door, was the word "Billiards."

Suiting the action to the word, the speaker plunged at once into the aperture, and vanished. The boy-companion was following more slowly, when his eye caught mine. A slight blush came over his dark cheek; he stopped, and leaning against the door-jambs, gazed on me hard and long before he said—"Well met again, sir! You find it hard to amuse yourself in this dull place; the nights are long out of London."

"Oh," said I, ingenuously, "everything here amuses me; the lights, the shops, the crowd; but then, to me everything is new."

The youth came from his lounging-place and moved on, as if inviting me to walk; while he answered, rather with bitter sullenness than the melancholy his words expressed—

"One thing, at least, cannot be new to you; it is an old truth with us before we leave the nursery—'Whatever is worth having must be bought; *ergo*, he who cannot buy, has nothing worth having.'"

"I don't think," said I wisely, "that the things best worth having can be bought at all. You see that poor dropsical jeweller standing before his shop-door: his shop is the finest in the street,—and I dare say he would be very glad to give it to you or me in return for our good health and strong legs. Oh no! I think with my father—'All that are worth having are given to all;' that is, nature and labour."

"Your father says that; and you go by what your father says! Of course, all fathers have preached that, and many other good doctrines, since Adam preached to Cain; but I don't see that the fathers have found their sons very credulous listeners."

"So much the worse for the sons," said I bluntly.

"Nature," continued my new acquaintance, without attending to my ejaculation—"nature indeed does give us much, and nature also orders each of us how to use her gifts. If nature give you the propensity to drudge, you will drudge; if she give me the ambition to rise, and the contempt for work, I may rise—but I certainly shall not work."

"Oh," said I, "you agree with Squills, I suppose, and fancy we are all guided by the bumps on our foreheads?"

"And the blood in our veins, and our mother's milk. We inherit other things besides gout and consumption. So you always do as your father tells you! Good boy!"

I was piqued. Why we should be ashamed of being taunted for goodness, I never could understand; but

certainly I felt humbled. However, I answered sturdily —"If you had as good a father as I have, you would not think it so very extraordinary to do as he tells you."

"Ah! so he is a very good father, is he! He must have a great trust in your sobriety and steadiness to let you wander about the world as he does."

"I am going to join him in London."

"In London! Oh, does he live there?"

"He is going to live there for some time."

"Then, perhaps, we may meet. I, too, am going to town."

"Oh, we shall be sure to meet there!" said I with frank gladness; for my interest in the young man was not diminished by his conversation, however much I disliked the sentiments it expressed.

The lad laughed—and his laugh was peculiar: it was low, musical, but hollow and artificial.

"Sure to meet! London is a large place: where shall you be found?"

I gave him, without scruple, the address of the hotel at which I expected to find my father; although his deliberate inspection of my knapsack must already have apprised him of that address. He listened attentively, and repeated it twice over, as if to impress it on his memory; and we both walked on in silence, till, turning up a small passage, we suddenly found ourselves in a large churchyard,—a flagged path stretched diagonally across it towards the market-place, on which it bordered. In this churchyard, upon a grave-stone, sat

a young Savoyard; his hurdy-gurdy, or whatever else his instrument might be called, was on his lap; and he was gnawing his crust, and feeding some poor little white mice (standing on their hind-legs on the hurdy-gurdy) as merrily as if he had chosen the gayest resting-place in the world.

We both stopped. The Savoyard, seeing us, put his arch head on one side, showed all his white teeth in that happy smile so peculiar to his race, and in which poverty seems to beg so blithely, and gave the handle of his instrument a turn.

"Poor child!" said I.

"Aha, you pity him! but why? According to your rule, Mr Caxton, he is not so much to be pitied; the dropsical jeweller would give him as much for his limbs and health as for ours! How is it—answer me, son of so wise a father—that no one pities the dropsical jeweller, and all pity the healthy Savoyard? Is it, sir, because there is a stern truth which is stronger than all Spartan lessons—Poverty *is* the master-ill of the world? Look round. Does poverty leave its signs over the graves? Look at that large tomb fenced round; read that long inscription!—'Virtue'—'best of husbands'—'affectionate father'—'inconsolable grief'—'sleeps in the joyful hope,' &c. &c. Do you suppose these stoneless mounds hide no dust of what were men just as good? But no epitaph tells their virtues, bespeaks their wives' grief, or promises joyful hope to them!"

"Does it matter? Does God care for the epitaph and tombstone?"

"*Date mi qualche cosa!*" said the Savoyard in his touching patois, still smiling, and holding out his little hand; therein I dropped a small coin. The boy evinced his gratitude by a new turn of the hurdy-gurdy.

"That is not labour," said my companion; "and had you found him at work, you had given him nothing. I too have my instrument to play upon, and my mice to see after. Adieu!"

He waved his hand, and strode irreverently over the graves back in the direction we had come.

I stood before the fine tomb with its fine epitaph; the Savoyard looked at me wistfully.

CHAPTER VI.

THE Savoyard looked at me wistfully. I wished to enter into conversation with him. That was not easy. However, I began :—

PISISTRATUS.—"You must be often hungry enough, my poor boy. Do the mice feed you?"

SAVOYARD puts his head on one side, shakes it, and strokes his mice.

PISISTRATUS.—"You are very fond of the mice; they are your only friends, I fear."

SAVOYARD, evidently understanding Pisistratus, rubs his face gently against the mice, then puts them softly down on a grave, and gives a turn to the hurdy-gurdy. The mice play unconcernedly over the grave.

PISISTRATUS, pointing first to the beasts, then to the instrument.—"Which do you like best, the mice or the hurdy-gurdy?"

SAVOYARD shows his teeth—considers—stretches himself on the grass—plays with the mice—and answers volubly.

PISISTRATUS, by the help of Latin comprehending that the Savoyard says that the mice are alive, and the hurdy-gurdy is not—"Yes, a live friend is better than a dead one. Mortua est hurda-gurda!"

Savoyard shakes his head vehemently. "Nô—nô! Eccellenza, non è morta!" and strikes up a lively air on the slandered instrument. The Savoyard's face brightens—he looks happy: the mice run from the grave into his bosom.

Pisistratus, affected, and putting the question in Latin.—"Have you a father?"

Savoyard, with his face overcast,—"Nô—Eccellenza!" then pausing a little, he says briskly, "Si si!" and plays a solemn air on the hurdy-gurdy—stops—rests one hand on the instrument, and raises the other to heaven.

Pisistratus understands: the father is like the hurdy-gurdy, at once dead and living. The mere form is a dead thing, but the music lives. Pisistratus drops another small piece of silver on the ground, and turns away.

God help and God bless thee, Savoyard. Thou hast done Pisistratus all the good in the world. Thou hast corrected the hard wisdom of the young gentleman in the velveteen jacket; Pisistratus is a better lad for having stopped to listen to thee.

I regained the entrance to the churchyard—I looked back: there sat the Savoyard, still amidst men's graves, but under God's sky. He was still looking at me wistfully; and when he caught my eye, he pressed his hand to his heart, and smiled. God help and God bless thee, young Savoyard.

PART FIFTH.

CHAPTER I.

In setting off the next morning, the Boots, whose heart I had won by an extra sixpence for calling me betimes, good-naturedly informed me that I might save a mile of the journey, and have a very pleasant walk into the bargain, if I took the footpath through a gentleman's park, the lodge of which I should see about seven miles from the town.

"And the grounds are showed too," said the Boots, "if so be you has a mind to stay and see 'em. But don't you go to the gardener, he'll want half-a-crown; there's an old 'oman at the lodge, who will show you all that's worth seeing—the walks and the big cascade—for a tizzy. You may make use of my name," he added proudly—"Bob, boots at the Lion. She be a *h*aunt o' mine, and she minds them that come from me pertiklerly."

Not doubting that the purest philanthropy actuated these counsels, I thanked my shock-headed friend, and asked carelessly to whom the park belonged.

"To Muster Trevanion, the great parliament man," answered the Boots. "You has heard o' him, I guess, sir?"

I shook my head, surprised every hour more and more to find how very little there was in it.

"They takes in the *Moderate Man's Journal* at the Lamb; and they say in the tap there that he's one of the cleverest chaps in the House o' Commons," continued the Boots in a confidential whisper. "But we takes in the *People's Thunderbolt* at the Lion, and we knows better this Muster Trevanion: he's but a trimmer—milk and water,—no *h*orator,—not the right sort,—you understand?"

Perfectly satisfied that I understood nothing about it, I smiled, and said, "Oh yes;" and slipping on my knapsack, commenced my adventures; the Boots bawling after me, "Mind, sir, you tells *h*aunt I sent you."

The town was only languidly putting forth symptoms of returning life as I strode through the streets; a pale sickly unwholesome look on the face of the slothful Phœbus had succeeded the feverish hectic of the past night: the artisans whom I met glided by me haggard and dejected; a few early shops were alone open; one or two drunken men, emerging from the lanes, sallied homeward with broken pipes in their mouths; bills, with large capitals, calling attention to "Best family teas at 4s. a-pound;" "the arrival of Mr Sloman's caravan of wild beasts;" and Dr Do'em's "Paracelsian Pills of Immortality," stared out dull and uncheering

from the walls of tenantless dilapidated houses, in that chill sunrise which favours no illusion. I was glad when I had left the town behind me, and saw the reapers in the cornfields, and heard the chirp of the birds. I arrived at the lodge of which the Boots had spoken: a pretty rustic building half-concealed by a belt of plantations, with two large iron gates for the owner's friends, and a small turnstile for the public, who, by some strange neglect on his part, or sad want of interest with the neighbouring magistrates, had still preserved a right to cross the rich man's domains, and look on his grandeur, limited to compliance with a reasonable request mildly stated on the notice-board, "to keep to the paths." As it was not yet eight o'clock, I had plenty of time before me to see the grounds, and profiting by the economical hint of the Boots, I entered the lodge, and inquired for the old lady who was *h*aunt to Mr Bob. A young woman, who was busied in preparing breakfast, nodded with great civility to this request, and, hastening to a bundle of clothes which I then perceived in the corner, she cried, "Grandmother, here's a gentleman to see the cascade."

The bundle of clothes then turned round, and exhibited a human countenance, which lighted up with great intelligence as the granddaughter, turning to me, said with simplicity—"She's old, honest cretur, but she still likes to earn a sixpence, sir;" and taking a crutch-staff in her hand while her granddaughter put

a neat bonnet on her head, this industrious gentlewoman sallied out at a pace which surprised me.

I attempted to enter into conversation with my guide; but she did not seem much inclined to be sociable, and the beauty of the glades and groves which now spread before my eyes reconciled me to silence.

I have seen many fine places since then, but I do not remember to have seen a landscape more beautiful in its peculiar English character than that which I now gazed on. It had none of the feudal characteristics of ancient parks, with giant oaks, fantastic pollards, glens covered with fern, and deer grouped upon the slopes; on the contrary, in spite of some fine trees, chiefly beech, the impression conveyed was, that it was a new place—a made place. You might see ridges on the lawns which showed where hedges had been removed; the pastures were parcelled out in divisions by new wire-fences; young plantations, planned with exquisite taste, but without the venerable formality of avenues and quincunxes, by which you know the parks that date from Elizabeth and James, diversified the rich extent of verdure; instead of deer, were short-horned cattle of the finest breed—sheep that would have won the prize at an agricultural show. Everywhere there was the evidence of improvement—energy—capital; but capital clearly not employed for the mere purpose of return. The ornamental was too conspicuously predominant amidst the lucrative, not to say eloquently—"The owner is willing to make the most of his land, but not the most of his money."

But the old woman's eagerness to earn sixpence had impressed me unfavourably as to the character of the master. "Here," thought I, "are all the signs of riches; and yet this poor old woman, living on the very threshold of opulence, is in want of a sixpence."

These surmises, in the indulgence of which I piqued myself on my penetration, were strengthened into convictions by the few sentences which I succeeded at last in eliciting from the old woman.

"Mr Trevanion must be a rich man?" said I.

"O ay, rich eno'!" grumbled my guide.

"And," said I, surveying the extent of shrubbery or dressed ground through which our way wound, now emerging into lawns and glades, now belted by rare garden-trees, now (as every inequality of the ground was turned to advantage in the landscape) sinking into the dell, now climbing up the slopes, and now confining the view to some object of graceful art or enchanting nature—"And," said I, "he must employ many hands here—plenty of work, eh?"

"Ay, ay—I don't say that he don't find work for those who want it. But it ain't the same place it wor in my day."

"You remember it in other hands, then?"

"Ay, ay! When the Hogtons had it, honest folk! My good man was the gardener—none of those set-up fine gentlemen who can't put hand to a spade!"

Poor faithful old woman!

I began to hate the unknown proprietor. Here clearly was some mushroom usurper who had bought

out the old simple hospitable family, neglected its ancient servants, left them to earn tizzies by showing waterfalls, and insulted their eyes by his selfish wealth.

"There's the water all spil't—it warn't so in my day," said the guide.

A rivulet, whose murmur I had long heard, now stole suddenly into view, and gave to the scene the crowning charm. As, relapsing into silence, we tracked its sylvan course, under dipping chestnuts and shady limes, the house itself emerged on the opposite side—a modern building of white stone, with the noblest Corinthian portico I ever saw in this country.

"A fine house, indeed," said I. "Is Mr Trevanion here much?"

"Ay, ay—I don't mean to say that he goes away altogether, but it ain't as it wor in my day, when the Hogtons lived here all the year round in their warm house,—not that one."

Good old woman, and these poor banished Hogtons! thought I: hateful parvenu! I was pleased when a curve in the shrubberies shut out the house from view, though in reality bringing us nearer to it. And the boasted cascade, whose roar I had heard for some moments, came in sight.

Amidst the Alps, such a waterfall would have been insignificant, but contrasting ground highly dressed, with no other bold features, its effect was striking, and even grand. The banks were here narrowed and compressed; rocks, partly natural, partly no doubt artificial, gave a rough aspect to the margin; and the cascade fell

from a considerable height into rapid waters, which my guide mumbled out were "mortal deep."

"There wor a madman leapt over where you be standing," said the old woman, "two years ago last June."

"A madman! why," said I, observing, with an eye practised in the gymnasium of the Hellenic Institute, the narrow space of the banks over the gulf—"why, my good lady, it need not be a madman to perform that leap."

And so saying, with one of those sudden impulses which it would be wrong to ascribe to the noble quality of courage, I drew back a few steps, and cleared the abyss. But when from the other side I looked back at what I had done, and saw that failure had been death, a sickness came over me, and I felt as if I would not have releapt the gulf to become lord of the domain.

"And how am I to get back?" said I in a forlorn voice to the old woman, who stood staring at me on the other side—"Ah! I see there is a bridge below?"

"But you can't go over the bridge; there's a gate on it; master keeps the key himself. You are in the private grounds now. Dear—dear! the squire would be so angry if he knew. You must go back; and they'll see you from the house! Dear me! dear—dear! What shall I do? Can't you leap back again?"

Moved by these piteous exclamations, and not wishing to subject the poor old lady to the wrath of a master evidently an unfeeling tyrant, I resolved to pluck up courage and releap the dangerous abyss.

"Oh yes—never fear," said I, therefore. "What's been done once ought to be done twice, if needful. Just get out of my way, will you?"

And I receded several paces over a ground much too rough to favour my run for a spring. But my heart knocked against my ribs. I felt that impulse can do wonders where preparation fails.

"You had best be quick, then," said the old woman.

Horrid old woman! I began to esteem her less. I set my teeth, and was about to rush on, when a voice close beside me said—

"Stay, young man; I will let you through the gate."

I turned round sharply, and saw close by my side, in great wonder that I had not seen him before, a man, whose homely (but not working) dress seemed to intimate his station as that of the head gardener, of whom my guide had spoken. He was seated on a stone under a chestnut tree, with an ugly cur at his feet, who snarled at me as I turned.

"Thank you, my man," said I joyfully. "I confess frankly that I was very much afraid of that leap."

"Ho! Yet you said, what can be done once can be done twice."

"I did not say it *could* be done, but *ought* to be done."

"Humph! That's better put."

Here the man rose; the dog came and smelt my legs, and then, as if satisfied with my respectability, wagged the stump of his tail.

I looked across the waterfall for the old woman, and,

to my surprise, saw her hobbling back as fast as she could.

"Ah!" said I, laughing, "the poor old thing is afraid you'll tell her master—for you're the head gardener, I suppose? But I am the only person to blame. Pray say that, if you mention the circumstance at all!" and I drew out half-a-crown, which I proffered to my new conductor.

He put back the money with a low "Humph—not amiss." Then, in a louder voice, "No occasion to bribe me, young man; I saw it all."

"I fear your master is rather hard to the poor Hogtons' old servants."

"Is he? Oh! humph! my master. Mr Trevanion you mean?"

"Yes."

"Well, I daresay people say so. This is the way." And he led me down a little glen away from the fall.

Everybody must have observed, that after he has incurred or escaped a great danger, his spirits rise wonderfully—he is in a state of pleasing excitement. So it was with me. I talked to the gardener *à cœur ouvert*, as the French say: and I did not observe that his short monosyllables in rejoinder all served to draw out my little history—my journey, its destination; my schooling under Dr Herman, and my father's Great Book. I was only made somewhat suddenly aware of the familiarity that had sprung up between us, when, just as, having performed a circuitous meander, we regained the

stream and stood before an iron gate, set in an arch of rock-work, my companion said simply—"And your name, young gentleman? What's your name?"

I hesitated a moment; but having heard that such communications were usually made by the visitors of show places, I answered—"Oh! a very venerable one, if your master is what they call a bibliomaniac—Caxton."

"Caxton!" cried the gardener, with some vivacity: "there is a Cumberland family of that name——"

"That's mine; and my Uncle Roland is the head of that family."

"And you are the son of Augustine Caxton?"

"I am. You have heard of my dear father, then?"

"We will not pass by the gate now. Follow me—this way; and my guide, turning abruptly round, strode up a narrow path, and the house stood a hundred yards before me ere I recovered my surprise.

"Pardon me," said I, "but where are we going, my good friend?"

"Good friend—good friend! Well said, sir. You are going amongst good friends. I was at college with your father. I loved him well. I knew a little of your uncle too. My name is Trevanion."

Blind young fool that I was! The moment my guide told his name, I was struck with amazement at my unaccountable mistake. The small, insignificant figure took instant dignity; the homely dress, of rough dark broadcloth, was the natural and becoming dishabille of

a country gentleman in his own demesnes. Even the ugly cur became a Scotch terrier of the rarest breed.

My guide smiled good-naturedly at my stupor; and patting me on the shoulder, said—

"It is the gardener you must apologise to, not me. *He* is a very handsome fellow, six feet high."

I had not found my tongue before we had ascended a broad flight of stairs under the portico; passed a spacious hall, adorned with statues and fragrant with large orange-trees; and, entering a small room hung with pictures, in which were arranged all the appliances for breakfast, my companion said to a lady, who rose from behind the tea-urn, "My dear Ellinor, I introduce to you the son of our old friend Augustine Caxton. Make him stay with us as long as he can. Young gentleman, in Lady Ellinor Trevanion think that you see one whom you ought to know well—family friendships should descend."

My host said these last words in an imposing tone, and then pounced on a letter-bag on the table, drew forth an immense heap of letters and newspapers, threw himself into an arm-chair, and seemed perfectly forgetful of my existence.

The lady stood a moment in mute surprise, and I saw that she changed colour from pale to red, and red to pale, before she came forward with the enchanting grace of unaffected kindness, took me by the hand, drew me to a seat next to her own, and asked so cordially after my father, my uncle, my whole family, that in five minutes I felt myself at home. Lady Ellinor listened

with a smile (though with moistened eyes, which she wiped every now and then) to my artless details. At length she said—

"Have you never heard your father speak of me—I mean of us—of the Trevanions?"

"Never," said I bluntly: "and that would puzzle me, only my dear father, you know, is not a great talker."

"Indeed! he was very animated when I knew him," said Lady Ellinor; and she turned her head and sighed.

At this moment there entered a young lady, so fresh, so blooming, so lovely, that every other thought vanished out of my head at once. She came in singing, as gay as a bird, and seeming to my adoring sight quite as native to the skies.

"Fanny," said Lady Ellinor, "shake hands with Mr Caxton, the son of one whom I have not seen since I was little older than you, but whom I remember as if it were but yesterday."

Miss Fanny blushed and smiled, and held out her hand with an easy frankness which I in vain endeavoured to imitate. During breakfast, Mr Trevanion continued to read his letters and glance over the papers, with an occasional ejaculation of "Pish!"—"Stuff!"—between the interval in which he mechanically swallowed his tea, or some small morsels of dry toast. Then rising with a suddenness which characterised his movements, he stood on his hearth for a few moments buried in thought; and now that a large-brimmed hat was removed from his brow, and the abruptness of his first

movement, with the sedateness of his after pause, arrested my curious attention, I was more than ever ashamed of my mistake. It was a careworn, eager, and yet musing countenance, hollow-eyed, and with deep lines; but it was one of those faces which take dignity and refinement from that mental cultivation which distinguishes the true aristocrat—viz. the highly educated, acutely intelligent man. Very handsome might that face have been in youth, for the features, though small, were exquisitely defined; the brow, partially bald, was noble and massive, and there was almost feminine delicacy in the curve of the lip. The whole expression of the face was commanding, but sad. Often, as my experience of life increased, have I thought to trace upon that expressive visage the history of energetic ambition curbed by a fastidious philosophy and a scrupulous conscience; but then all that I could see was a vague, dissatisfied melancholy, which dejected me I knew not why.

Presently Trevanion returned to the table, collected his letters, moved slowly towards the door, and vanished.

His wife's eyes followed him tenderly. Those eyes reminded me of my mother's, as I verily believe did all eyes that expressed affection. I crept nearer to her, and longed to press the white hand that lay so listless before me.

"Will you walk out with us?" said Miss Trevanion, turning to me. I bowed, and in a few minutes I found myself alone. While the ladies left me, for their shawls and bonnets, I took up the newspapers which Mr

Trevanion had thrown on the table, by way of something to do. My eye was caught by his own name; it occurred often, and in all the papers. There was contemptuous abuse in one, high eulogy in another; but one passage, in a journal that seemed to aim at impartiality, struck me so much as to remain in my memory; and I am sure that I can still quote the sense, though not the exact words. The paragraph ran somewhat thus:—

"In the present state of parties, our contemporaries have, not unnaturally, devoted much space to the claims or demerits of Mr Trevanion. It is a name that stands unquestionably high in the House of Commons; but, as unquestionably, it commands little sympathy in the country. Mr Trevanion is essentially and emphatically *a member of parliament.* He is a close and ready debater; he is an admirable chairman in committees. Though never in office, his long experience of public life, his gratuitous attention to public business, have ranked him high among those practical politicians from whom ministers are selected. A man of spotless character and excellent intentions, no doubt, he must be considered; and in him any cabinet would gain an honest and a useful member. There ends all we can say in his praise. As a speaker he wants the fire and enthusiasm which engage the popular sympathies. He has the ear of the House, not the heart of the country. An oracle on subjects of mere business, in the great questions of policy he is comparatively a failure. He never embraces any party heartily; he never espouses

any question as if wholly in earnest. The moderation on which he is said to pique himself, often exhibits itself in fastidious crotchets, and an attempt at philosophical originality of candour, which has long obtained him, with his enemies, the reputation of a trimmer. Such a man circumstances may throw into temporary power; but can he command lasting influence? No: let Mr Trevanion remain in what nature and position assign as his proper post—that of an upright, independent, able member of parliament; conciliating sensible men on both sides, when party runs into extremes. He is undone as a cabinet minister. His scruples would break up any government; and his want of decision—when, as in all human affairs, some errors must be conceded to obtain a great good—would shipwreck his own fame."

I had just got to the end of this paragraph when the ladies returned.

My hostess observed the newspaper in my hand, and said, with a constrained smile, "Some attack on Mr Trevanion, I suppose?"

"No," said I, awkwardly; for, perhaps, the paragraph that appeared to me so impartial, was the most galling attack of all—"No, not exactly."

"I never read the papers now, at least what are called the leading articles—it is too painful: and once they gave me so much pleasure—that was when the career began, and before the fame was made."

Here Lady Ellinor opened the window which admitted on the lawn, and in a few moments we were in that

part of the pleasure-grounds which the family reserved from the public curiosity. We passed by rare shrubs and strange flowers, long ranges of conservatories, in which bloomed and lived all the marvellous vegetation of Africa and the Indies.

"Mr Trevanion is fond of flowers?" said I.

The fair Fanny laughed. "I don't think he knows one from another."

"Nor I either," said I: "that is, when I fairly lose sight of a rose or a hollyhock."

"The farm will interest you more," said Lady Ellinor.

We came to farm buildings recently erected, and no doubt on the most improved principle. Lady Ellinor pointed out to me machines and contrivances of the newest fashion, for abridging labour, and perfecting the mechanical operations of agriculture.

"Ah, then, Mr Trevanion is fond of farming?"

The pretty Fanny laughed again.

"My father is one of the great oracles in agriculture, one of the great patrons of all its improvements; but as for being fond of farming, I doubt if he knows his own fields when he rides through them."

We returned to the house; and Miss Trevanion, whose frank kindness had already made too deep an impression upon the youthful heart of Pisistratus the Second, offered to show me the picture-gallery. The collection was confined to the works of English artists; and Miss Trevanion pointed out to me the main attractions of the gallery.

"Well, at least Mr Trevanion is fond of pictures?"

"Wrong again," said Fanny, shaking her arch head. "My father is said to be an admirable judge; but he only buys pictures from a sense of duty—to encourage our own painters. A picture once bought, I am not sure that he ever looks at it again."

"What does he then——" I stopped short, for I felt my meditated question was ill-bred.

"What does he like then? you were about to say. Why, I have known him, of course, since I could know anything; but I have never yet discovered what my father does like. No—not even politics, though he lives for politics alone. You look puzzled; you will know him better some day, I hope; but you will never solve the mystery—what Mr Trevanion likes."

"You are wrong," said Lady Ellinor, who had followed us into the room, unheard by us. "I can tell you what your father does more than like—what he loves and serves every hour of his noble life—justice, beneficence, honour, and his country. A man who loves these may be excused for indifference to the last geranium, or the newest plough, or even (though that offends you more, Fanny) the freshest masterpiece by Landseer, or the latest fashion honoured by Miss Trevanion."

"Mamma!" said Fanny, and the tears sprang to her eyes.

But Lady Ellinor looked to me sublime as she spoke, her eyes kindled, her breast heaved. The wife taking the husband's part against the child, and comprehend-

ing so well what the child felt not, despite its experience of every day, and what the world would never know, despite all the vigilance of its praise and its blame, was a picture, to my taste, finer than any in the collection.

Her face softened as she saw the tears in Fanny's bright hazel eyes; she held out her hand, which her child kissed tenderly: and whispering, "'Tis not the giddy word you must go by, mamma, or there will be something to forgive every minute," Miss Trevanion glided from the room.

"Have you a sister?" asked lady Ellinor.

"No."

"And Trevanion has no son," she said, mournfully. The blood rushed to my cheeks. Oh! young fool, again! We were both silent, when the door was opened, and Mr Trevanion entered.

"Humph!" said he, smiling as he saw me—and his smile was charming though rare. "Humph, young sir, I came to seek for you,—I have been rude, I fear: pardon it—that thought has only just occurred to me, so I left my Blue Books, and my amanuensis hard at work on them, to ask you to come out for half an hour,—just half an hour, it is all I can give you—a deputation at One! You dine and sleep here, of course?"

"Ah, sir! my mother will be so uneasy if I am not in town to-night."

"Pooh!" said the member, "I'll send an express."

"Oh, no indeed; thank you."

"Why not?"

I hesitated. "You see, sir, that my father and mother are both new to London: and though I am new too, yet they may want me—I may be of use." Lady Ellinor put her hand on my head, and sleeked down my hair as I spoke.

"Right, young man, right; you will do in the world, wrong as that is. I don't mean that you'll *succeed*, as the rogues say—that's another question; but if you don't rise, you'll not fall. Now, put on your hat and come with me; we'll walk to the lodge—you will be in time for a coach."

I took my leave of Lady Ellinor, and longed to say something about "compliments to Miss Fanny;" but the words stuck in my throat, and my host seemed impatient.

"We must see you soon again!" said Lady Ellinor kindly, as she followed us to the door.

Mr Trevanion walked on briskly and in silence—one hand in his bosom, the other swinging carelessly a thick walking-stick.

"But I must go round by the bridge," said I, "for I forgot my knapsack. I threw it off when I made my leap, and the old lady certainly never took charge of it."

"Come, then, this way. How old are you?"

"Seventeen and a half."

"You know Latin and Greek as they know them at schools, I suppose?"

"I think I know them pretty well, sir."

"Does your father say so?"

"Why, my father is fastidious; however, he owns that he is satisfied, on the whole."

"So am I, then. Mathematics?"

"A little."

"Good."

Here the conversation dropped for some time. I had found and restrapped the knapsack, and we were near the lodge, when Mr Trevanion said, abruptly, "Talk, my young friend, talk: I like to hear you talk—it refreshes me. Nobody has talked naturally to me these last ten years."

The request was a complete damper to my ingenuous eloquence: I could not have talked naturally now for the life of me.

"I made a mistake, I see," said my companion, good-humouredly, noticing my embarrassment. "Here we are at the lodge. The coach will be by in five minutes: you can spend that time in hearing the old woman praise the Hogtons and abuse me. And hark you, sir, never care three straws for praise or blame—leather and prunella! praise and blame are *here!*" and he struck his hand upon his breast, with almost passionate emphasis. "Take a specimen. These Hogtons were the bane of the place; uneducated and miserly; their land a wilderness, their village a pig-sty. I come, with capital and intelligence; I redeem the soil, I banish pauperism, I civilise all around me; no merit in me—I am but a type of capital guided by education—a machine. And yet the old woman is not the only

one who will hint to you that the Hogtons were angels, and myself the usual antithesis to angels. And, what is more, sir, because that old woman, who has ten shillings a-week from me, sets her heart upon earning her sixpences—and I give her that privileged luxury—every visitor she talks to goes away with the idea that I, the rich Mr Trevanion, let her starve on what she can pick up from the sight-seers. Now, does that signify a jot? Good-by. Tell your father his old friend must see him; profit by his calm wisdom; his old friend is a fool sometimes, and sad at heart. When you are settled, send me a line to St James's Square, to say where you are. Humph! that's enough."

Mr Trevanion wrung my hand, and strode off.

I did not wait for the coach, but proceeded towards the turn-stile where the old woman (who had either seen, or scented from a distance, that tizzy of which I was the impersonation)—

"Hushed in grim repose, did wait her morning prey."

My opinions as to her sufferings, and the virtues of the departed Hogtons, somewhat modified, I contented myself with dropping into her open palm the exact sum virtually agreed on. But that palm still remained open, and the fingers of the other clawed hold of me as I stood, impounded in the curve of the turnstile, like a cork in a patent corkscrew.

"And threepence for Nephy Bob," said the old lady.

"Threepence for nephew Bob, and why?"

"'Tis his parquisites when he recommends a gentle-

man. You would not have me pay out of my own earnings: for he *will* have it, or he'll ruin my bizziness. Poor folk must be paid for their trouble."

Obdurate to this appeal, and mentally consigning Bob to a master whose feet would be all the handsomer for boots, I threaded the stile and escaped.

Towards evening I reached London. Who ever saw London for the first time and was not disappointed? Those long suburbs melting indefinably away into the capital, forbid all surprise. The gradual is a great disenchanter. I thought it prudent to take a hackney-coach, and so jolted my way to the —— Hotel, the door of which was in a small street out of the Strand, though the greater part of the building faced that noisy thoroughfare. I found my father in a state of great discomfort in a little room, which he paced up and down like a lion new caught in his cage. My poor mother was full of complaints—for the first time in her life, I found her indisputably crossish. It was an ill time to relate my adventures. I had enough to do to listen. They had all day been hunting for lodgings in vain. My father's pocket had been picked of a new India handkerchief. Primmins, who ought to know London so well, knew nothing about it, and declared it was turned topsy-turvy, and all the streets had changed names. The new silk umbrella, left for five minutes unguarded in the hall, had been exchanged for an old gingham with three holes in it.

It was not till my mother remembered that if she did not see herself that my bed was well aired I should

certainly lose the use of my limbs, and therefore disappeared with Primmins and a pert chambermaid, who seemed to think we gave more trouble than we were worth, that I told my father of my new acquaintance with Mr Trevanion.

He did not seem to listen to me till I got to the name *Trevanion*. He then became very pale, and sat down quietly. "Go on," said he, observing I stopped to look at him.

When I had told all, and given him the kind messages with which I had been charged by husband and wife, he smiled faintly: and then, shading his face with his hand, he seemed to muse, not cheerfully, perhaps, for I heard him sigh once or twice.

"And Ellinor," said he at last, without looking up —"Lady Ellinor, I mean: she is very—very——"

"Very what, sir?"

"Very handsome still?"

"Handsome! Yes, handsome, certainly; but I thought more of her manner than her face. And then Fanny, Miss Fanny, is so young!"

"Ah!" said my father, murmuring in Greek the celebrated lines of which Pope's translation is familiar to all:

> "'Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,
> Now green in youth, now withering on the ground.'

"Well, so they wish to see me. Did Ellinor, Lady Ellinor, say that, or her—her husband?"

"Her husband, certainly—Lady Ellinor rather implied than said it."

"We shall see," said my father. "Open the window, this room is stifling."

I opened the window, which looked on the Strand. The noise, the voices, the trampling feet, the rolling wheels, became loudly audible. My father leant out for some moments, and I stood by his side. He turned to me with a serene face. "Every ant on the hill," said he, "carries its load, and its home is but made by the burden that it bears. How happy am I!—how I should bless God! How light my burden!—how secure my home!"

My mother came in as he ceased. He went up to her, put his arm round her waist and kissed her.

Such caresses with him had not lost their tender charm by custom: my mother's brow, before somewhat ruffled, grew smooth on the instant. Yet she lifted her eyes to his in soft surprise. "I was but thinking," said my father, apologetically, "how much I owed you, and how much I love you!"

CHAPTER II.

And now behold us, three days after my arrival, settled in all the state and grandeur of our own house in Russell Street, Bloomsbury: the library of the Museum close at hand. My father spends his mornings in those *lata silentia*, as Virgil calls the world beyond the grave. And a world beyond the grave we may well call that land of the ghosts, a book collection.

"Pisistratus," said my father, one evening as he arranged his notes before him, and rubbed his spectacles. "Pisistratus, a great library is an *awful* place! There are interred all the remains of men since the Flood."

"It is a burial-place!" quoth my Uncle Roland, who had that day found us out.

"It is an Heraclea!" said my father.

"Please, not such hard words," said the Captain, shaking his head.

"Heraclea was the city of necromancers, in which they raised the dead. Do I want to speak to Cicero? —I invoke him. Do I want to chat in the Athenian market-place, and hear news two thousand years old? —I write down my charm on a slip of paper, and a

grave magician calls me up Aristophanes. And we owe all this to our ancest——"

"Brother!"

"Ancestors, who wrote books—thank you."

Here Roland offered his snuff-box to my father, who, abhorring snuff, benignly imbibed a pinch, and sneezed five times in consequence: an excuse for Uncle Roland to say, which he did five times, with great unction, "God bless you, brother Austin!"

As soon as my father had recovered himself, he proceeded, with tears in his eyes, but calm as before the interruption—for he was of the philosophy of the Stoics:—

"But it is not *that* which is awful. It is the presuming to vie with these 'spirits elect:' to say to them, 'Make way—I too claim place with the chosen. I too would confer with the living, centuries after the death that consumes my dust. I too'—Ah, Pisistratus! I wish Uncle Jack had been at Jericho before he had brought me up to London, and placed me in the midst of those rulers of the world!"

I was busy, while my father spoke, in making some pendant shelves for these "spirits elect:" for my mother, always provident where my father's comforts were concerned, had foreseen the necessity of some such accommodation in a hired lodging-house, and had not only carefully brought up to town my little box of tools, but gone out herself that morning to buy the raw materials. Checking the plane in its progress over the smooth deal, "My dear father," said I, "if at the

Philhellenic Institute I had looked with as much awe as you do on the big fellows that had gone before me, I should have stayed, to all eternity, the lag of the Infant Division."

"Pisistratus, you are as great an agitator as your namesake," cried my father, smiling. "And so, a fig for the big fellows!"

And now my mother entered in her pretty evening cap, all smiles and good-humour, having just arranged a room for Uncle Roland, concluded advantageous negotiations with the laundress, held high council with Mrs Primmins on the best mode of defeating the extortions of London tradesmen; and, pleased with herself and all the world, she kissed my father's forehead as it bent over his notes, and came to the tea-table, which only waited its presiding deity. My Uncle Roland, with his usual gallantry, started up, kettle in hand (our own urn—for we had one—not being yet unpacked), and having performed with soldier-like method the chivalrous office thus volunteered, he joined me at my employment, and said—

"There is a better steel for the hands of a well-born lad than a carpenter's plane."

"Aha! uncle—that depends——"

"Depends!—What on?"

"On the use one makes of it. Peter the Great was better employed in making ships than Charles XII. in cutting throats."

"Poor Charles XII.!" said my uncle, sighing pathetically—"a very brave fellow!"

"Pity he did not like the ladies a little better!"

"No man is perfect!" said my uncle, sententiously. "But, seriously, you are *now* the male hope of the family—you are now——" My uncle stopped, and his face darkened. I saw that he thought of his son—that mysterious son! And, looking at him tenderly, I observed that his deep lines had grown deeper, his iron-grey hair more grey. There was the trace of recent suffering on his face; and though he had not spoken to us a word of the business on which he had left us, it required no penetration to perceive that it had come to no successful issue.

My uncle resumed—"Time out of mind, every generation of our house has given one soldier to his country. I look round now: only one branch is budding yet on the old tree; and——"

"Ah! uncle. But what would *they* say? Do you think I should not like to be a soldier? Don't tempt me!"

My uncle had recourse to his snuff-box: and at that moment, unfortunately, perhaps, for the laurels that might otherwise have wreathed the brows of Pisistratus of England,—private conversation was stopped by the sudden and noisy entrance of Uncle Jack. No apparition could have been more unexpected.

"Here I am, my dear friends. How d'ye do—how are you all? Captain de Caxton, yours heartily. Yes, I am released, thank heaven! I have given up the drudgery of that pitiful provincial paper. I was not made for it. An ocean in a tea-cup! I was indeed!

Little, sordid, narrow interests—and I, whose heart embraces all humanity. You might as well turn a circle into an isolated triangle."

"Isosceles!" said my father, sighing as he pushed aside his notes, and very slowly becoming aware of the eloquence that destroyed all chance of further progress that night in the Great Book. "Isosceles triangle, Jack Tibbets—not isolated.

"Isosceles or isolated, it is all one," said Uncle Jack, as he rapidly performed three evolutions, by no means consistent with his favourite theory of "the greatest happiness of the greatest number:"—first, he emptied into the cup which he took from my mother's hands half the thrifty contents of a London cream-jug; secondly, he reduced the circle of a muffin, by the abstraction of three triangles, to as nearly an isosceles as possible; and thirdly, striding towards the fire, lighted in consideration of Captain de Caxton, and hooking his coat-tails under his arms, while he sipped his tea, he permitted another circle peculiar to humanity wholly to eclipse the luminary it approached.

"Isolated or isosceles, it is all the same thing. Man is made for his fellow-creatures. I had long been disgusted with the interference of those selfish Squire-archs. Your departure decided me. I have concluded negotiations with a London firm of spirit and capital, and extended views of philanthropy. On Saturday last I retired from the service of the oligarchy. I am now in my true capacity of protector of the million. My prospectus is printed—here it is in my pocket.—

Another cup of tea, sister; a little more cream, and another muffin. Shall I ring?" Having disembarrassed himself of his cup and saucer, Uncle Jack then drew forth from his pocket a damp sheet of printed paper. In large capitals stood out "The ANTI-MONOPOLY GAZETTE, or POPULAR CHAMPION." He waved it triumphantly before my father's eyes.

"Pisistratus," said my father, "look here. This is the way your Uncle Jack now prints his pats of butter: a cap of liberty growing out of an open book! Good, Jack! Good! good!"

"It is Jacobinical!" exclaimed the Captain.

"Very likely," said my father; "but knowledge and freedom are the best devices in the world to print upon pats of butter intended for the market."

"Pats of butter! I don't understand," said Uncle Jack.

"The less you understand, the better will the butter sell, Jack," said my father, settling back to his notes.

CHAPTER III.

Uncle Jack had made up his mind to lodge with us, and my mother found some difficulty in inducing him to comprehend that there was no bed to spare.

"That's unlucky," said he. "I had no sooner arrived in town than I was pestered with invitations; but I refused them all, and kept myself for you."

"So kind in you! so like you!" said my mother; "but you see——"

"Well, then, I must be off and find a room. Don't fret; you know I can breakfast and dine with you all the same; that is, when my other friends will let me. I shall be dreadfully persecuted." So saying, Uncle Jack repocketed his prospectus, and wished us good-night.

The clock had struck eleven, my mother had retired, when my father looked up from his books, and returned his spectacles to their case. I had finished my work, and was seated over the fire, thinking now of Fanny Trevanion's hazel eyes—now, with a heart that beat as high at the thought of campaigns, battle-fields, laurels, and glory; while, with his arms folded on his breast and his head drooping, Uncle Roland gazed into the

low clear embers. My father cast his eyes round the room, and after surveying his brother for some moments, he said, almost in a whisper—

"My son has seen the Trevanions. They remember us, Roland."

The Captain sprang to his feet, and began whistling —a habit with him when he was much disturbed.

"And Trevanion wishes to see us. Pisistratus promised to give him our address; shall he do so, Roland?"

"If you like it," answered the Captain, in a military attitude, and drawing himself up till he looked seven feet high.

"I *should* like it," said my father, mildly. "Twenty years since we met."

"More than twenty," said my uncle, with a stern smile; "and the season was—the fall of the leaf!"

"Man renews the fibre and material of his body every seven years," said my father; "in three times seven years he has time to renew the inner man. Can two passengers in yonder street be more unlike each other than the soul is to the soul after an interval of twenty years? Brother, the plough does not pass over the soil in vain, nor care over the human heart. New crops change the character of the land; and the plough must go deep indeed before it stirs up the mother stone."

"Let us see Trevanion," cried my uncle; then, turning to me, he said, abruptly, "What family has he?"

"One daughter."

"No son?"

"No."

"That must vex the poor foolish ambitious man. Oho! you admire this Mr Trevanion much, eh? Yes, that fire of manner, his fine words, and bold thoughts, were made to dazzle youth."

"Fine words, my dear uncle!—fire! I should have said, in hearing Mr Trevanion, that his style of conversation was so homely, you would wonder how he could have won such fame as a public speaker."

"Indeed!"

"The plough has passed there," said my father.

"But not the plough of care: rich, famous, Ellinor his wife, and no son!"

"It is because his heart is sometimes sad that he would see us."

Roland stared first at my father, next at me. "Then," quoth my uncle, heartily, "in God's name, let him come. I can shake him by the hand, as I would a brother soldier. Poor Trevanion! Write to him at once, Sisty."

I sat down and obeyed. When I had sealed my letter, I looked up, and saw that Roland was lighting his bed-candle at my father's table; and my father, taking his hand, said something to him in a low voice. I guessed it related to his son, for he shook his head, and answered in a stern, hollow voice, "Renew grief if you please—not shame. On that subject—silence!"

CHAPTER IV.

Left to myself in the earlier part of the day, I wandered, wistful and lonely, through the vast wilderness of London. By degrees, I familiarised myself with that populous solitude—I ceased to pine for the green fields. That active energy all around, at first saddening, became soon exhilarating, and at last contagious. To an industrious mind, nothing is so catching as industry. I began to grow weary of my golden holiday of unlaborious childhood, to sigh for toil, to look around me for a career. The University, which I had before anticipated with pleasure, seemed now to fade into a dull monastic prospect: after having trode the streets of London, to wander through cloisters was to go back in life. Day by day, my mind grew sensibly within me; it came out from the rosy twilight of boyhood,—it felt the doom of Cain, under the broad sun of man.

Uncle Jack soon became absorbed in his new speculation for the good of the human race, and, except at meals (whereat, to do him justice, he was punctual enough, though he did not keep us in ignorance of the sacrifices he made, and the invitations he refused, for

our sake), we seldom saw him. The Captain, too, generally vanished after breakfast, seldom dined with us, and it was often late before he returned. He had the latch-key of the house, and let himself in when he pleased. Sometimes (for his chamber was next to mine) his step on the stairs awoke me; and sometimes I heard him pace his room with perturbed strides, or fancied that I caught a low groan. He became every day more care-worn in appearance, and every day the hair seemed more gray. Yet he talked to us all easily and cheerfully; and I thought that I was the only one in the house who perceived the gnawing pangs over which the stout old Spartan drew the decorous cloak.

Pity, blended with admiration, made me curious to learn how these absent days, that brought nights so disturbed, were consumed. I felt that, if I could master the Captain's secret, I might win the right both to comfort and to aid.

I resolved at length, after many conscientious scruples, to endeavour to satisfy a curiosity excused by its motives.

Accordingly, one morning, after watching him from the house, I stole in his track, and followed him at a distance.

And this was the outline of his day: he set off at first with a firm stride, despite his lameness—his gaunt figure erect, the soldierly chest well thrown out from the threadbare but speckless coat. First, he took his way towards the purlieus of Leicester Square; several times, to and fro, did he pace the isthmus that leads

from Piccadilly into that reservoir of foreigners, and the lanes and courts that start thence towards St Martin's. After an hour or two so passed, the step became more slow; and often the sleek, napless hat was lifted up, and the brow wiped. At length he bent his way towards the two great theatres, paused before the play-bills, as if deliberating seriously on the chances of entertainment they severally proffered, wandered slowly through the small streets that surround those temples of the Muse, and finally emerged into the Strand. There he rested himself for an hour, at a small cook-shop; and, as I passed the window and glanced within, I could see him seated before the simple dinner, which he scarcely touched, and poring over the advertisement columns of the *Times*. The *Times* finished, and a few morsels distastefully swallowed, the Captain put down his shilling in silence, receiving his pence in exchange, and I had just time to slip aside as he reappeared at the threshold. He looked round as he lingered, but I took care he should not detect me; and then struck off towards the more fashionable quarters of the town. It was now the afternoon, and, though not yet the season, the streets swarmed with life. As he came into Waterloo Place, a slight but muscular figure buttoned up across the breast like his own, cantered by on a handsome bay horse: every eye was on that figure. Uncle Roland stopped short, and lifted his hand to his hat; the rider touched his own with his forefinger, and cantered on—Uncle Roland turned round and gazed.

"Who," I asked, of a shop-boy just before me, also staring with all his eyes—"who is that gentleman on horseback?"

"Why, the Duke to be sure," said the boy, contemptuously.

"The Duke?"

"Wellington—stu-pid!"

"Thank you," said I, meekly. Uncle Roland had moved on into Regent Street, but with a brisker step: the sight of the old chief had done the old soldier good. Here again he paced to and fro; till I, watching him from the other side of the way, was ready to drop with fatigue, stout walker though I was. But the Captain's day was not half done. He took out his watch, put it to his ear, and then, replacing it, passed into Bond Street, and thence into Hyde Park. There, evidently wearied out, he leant against the rails, near the bronze statue, in an attitude that spoke despondency. I seated myself on the grass near the statue, and gazed at him; the park was empty compared with the streets, but still there were some equestrian idlers, and many foot-loungers. My uncle's eye turned wistfully on each: once or twice, some gentleman of a military aspect (which I had already learned to detect) stopped, looked at him, approached, and spoke; but the Captain seemed as if ashamed of such greetings. He answered shortly, and turned again:

The day waned—evening came on: the Captain again looked at his watch, shook his head, and made his way to a bench, where he sat perfectly motionless—

his hat over his brows, his arms folded; till uprose the moon. I had tasted nothing since breakfast—I was famished; but I still kept my post like an old Roman sentinel.

At length the Captain rose, and re-entered Piccadilly; but how different his mien and bearing! languid, stooping; his chest sunk, his head inclined; his limbs dragging one after the other; his lameness painfully perceptible. What a contrast in the broken invalid at night from the stalwart veteran of the morning!

How I longed to spring forward to offer my arm! but I did not dare.

The Captain stopped near a cab-stand. He put his hand in his pocket—he drew out his purse—he passed his fingers over the network; the purse slipped again into the pocket, and, as if with a heroic effort, my uncle drew up his head, and walked on sturdily.

"Where next?" thought I. "Surely home! No, he is pitiless!"

The Captain stopped not till he arrived at one of the small theatres in the Strand; then he read the bill, and asked if half-price was begun. "Just begun," was the answer, and the Captain entered. I also took a ticket and followed. Passing by the open doors of a refreshment-room, I fortified myself with some biscuits and soda-water; and in another minute, for the first time in my life, I beheld a play. But the play did not fascinate me. It was the middle of some jocular afterpiece; roars of laughter resounded

round me. I could detect nothing to laugh at, and sending my keen eyes into every corner, I perceived at last, in the uppermost tier, one face as saturnine as my own. *Eureka!* It was the Captain's! "Why should he go to a play if he enjoys it so little!" thought I; "better have spent a shilling on a cab, poor old fellow!"

But soon came smart-looking men, and still smarter-looking ladies, around the solitary corner of the poor Captain. He grew fidgety—he rose—he vanished. I left my place, and stood without the box to watch for him. Downstairs he stumped—I recoiled into the shade; and after standing a moment or two, as in doubt, he entered boldly the refreshment-room or saloon.

Now, since I had left that saloon, it had become crowded, and I slipped in unobserved. Strange was it, grotesque yet pathetic, to mark the old soldier in the midst of that gay swarm. He towered above all like a Homeric hero, a head taller than the tallest; and his appearance was so remarkable, that it invited the instant attention of the fair. I, in my simplicity, thought it was the natural tenderness of that amiable and penetrating sex, ever quick to detect trouble and anxious to relieve it, which induced three ladies, in silk attire—one having a hat and plume, the other two with a profusion of ringlets—to leave a little knot of gentlemen with whom they were conversing, and to plant themselves before my uncle. I advanced through the press to hear what passed.

"You are looking for some one, I'm sure," quoth one, familiarly, tapping his arm with her fan.

The Captain started. "Ma'am, you are not wrong," said he.

"Can I do as well?" said one of those compassionate angels, with heavenly sweetness.

"You are very kind, I thank you; no, no, ma'am," said the Captain, with his best bow.

"Do take a glass of negus," said another, as her friend gave way to her. "You seem tired, and so am I. Here, this way;" and she took hold of his arm to lead him to the table. The Captain shook his head mournfully; and then, as if suddenly aware of the nature of the attentions so lavished on him, he looked down upon these fair Armidas with a look of such mild reproach, such sweet compassion—not shaking off the hand, in his chivalrous devotion to the sex, which extended even to all its outcasts—that each bold eye fell abashed. The hand was timidly and involuntarily withdrawn from the arm, and my uncle passed his way.

He threaded the crowd, passed out at the further door, and I, guessing his intention, was in waiting for his steps in the street.

"Now home at last, thank heaven!" thought I. Mistaken still! My uncle went first towards that popular haunt which I have since discovered is called "the Shades;" but he soon re-emerged, and finally he knocked at the door of a private house in one of the streets out of St James's. It was opened jealously, and closed as he entered, leaving me without. What could

this house be? As I stood and watched, some other men approached,—again the low single knock,—again the jealous opening, and the stealthy entrance.

A policeman passed and repassed me. "Don't be tempted, young man," said he, looking hard at me: "take my advice, and go home."

"What is that house, then?" said I, with a sort of shudder at this ominous warning.

"Oh, you know."

"Not I. I am new to London."

"It is a hell," said the policeman—satisfied, by my frank manner, that I spoke the truth.

"God bless me—a what? I could not have heard you rightly?"

"A hell; a gambling-house!"

"Oh!" and I moved on. Could Captain Roland, the rigid, the thrifty, the penurious, be a gambler? The light broke on me at once: the unhappy father sought his son! I leant against the post, and tried hard not to sob.

By-and-by, I heard the door open: the Captain came out and took the way homeward. I ran on before, and got in first, to the inexpressible relief both of father and mother, who had not seen me since breakfast, and who were in equal consternation at my absence. I submitted to be scolded with a good grace. "I had been sight-seeing, and lost my way;" begged for some supper, and slunk to bed; and five minutes afterwards the Captain's jaded step came wearily up the stairs.

PART SIXTH.

CHAPTER I.

"I DON'T know that," said my father.

What is it my father does not know? My father does not know that "happiness is our being's end and aim."

And pertinent to what does my father reply, by words so sceptical, to an assertion so seldom disputed?

Reader, Mr Trevanion has been half an hour seated in our little drawing-room. He has received two cups of tea from my mother's fair hand; he has made himself at home. With Mr Trevanion has come another old friend of my father's, whom he has not seen since he left college—Sir Sedley Beaudesert.

Now, you must understand that it is a warm night, a little after nine o'clock—a night between departing summer and approaching autumn. The windows are open—we have a balcony, which my mother has taken care to fill with flowers—the air, though we are in London, is sweet and fresh—the street quiet, except

that an occasional carriage or hackney cabriolet rolls rapidly by—a few stealthy passengers pass to and fro noiselessly on their way homeward. We are on classic ground—near that old and venerable Museum, the dark monastic pile which the taste of the age had spared then—and the quiet of the temple seems to hallow the precincts. Captain Roland is seated by the fireplace, and, though there is no fire, he is shading his face with a hand-screen; my father and Mr Trevanion have drawn their chairs close to each other in the middle of the room; Sir Sedley Beaudesert leans against the wall near the window, and behind my mother, who looks prettier and more pleased than usual, since her Austin has his old friends about him; and I, leaning my elbow on the table, and my chin upon my hand, am gazing with great admiration on Sir Sedley Beaudesert.

O rare specimen of a race fast decaying!—specimen of the true fine gentleman, ere the word dandy was known, and before exquisite became a noun substantive—let me here pause to describe thee! Sir Sedley Beaudesert was the contemporary of Trevanion and my father; but, without affecting to be young, he still seemed so. Dress, tone, look, manner—all were young—yet all had a certain dignity which does not belong to youth. At the age of five-and-twenty, he had won what would have been fame to a French marquis of the old *régime*, viz.—the reputation of being "the most charming man of his day"—the most popular of our sex—the most favoured, my dear lady-reader, by yours. It is a mistake, I believe, to suppose that

it does not require talent to become the fashion; at all events, Sir Sedley was the fashion, and he had talent. He had travelled much, he had read much—especially in memoirs, history, and belles-lettres—he made verses with grace and a certain originality of easy wit and courtly sentiment—he conversed delightfully, he was polished and urbane in manner—he was brave and honourable in conduct; in words he could flatter—in deeds he was sincere.

Sir Sedley Beaudesert had never married. Whatever his years, he was still young enough in looks to be married for love. He was highborn, he was rich; he was, as I have said, popular; yet on his fair features there was an expression of melancholy; and on that forehead—pure from the lines of ambition, and free from the weight of study—there was the shadow of unmistakable regret.

"I don't know that," said my father; "I have never yet found in life one man who made happiness his end and aim. One wants to gain a fortune, another to spend it—one to get a place, another to build a name; but they all know very well that it is not happiness they search for. No Utilitarian was ever actuated by self-interest, poor man, when he sat down to scribble his unpopular crotchets to prove self-interest universal. And as to that notable distinction—between self-interest vulgar and self-interest enlightened—the more the self-interest is enlightened, the less we are influenced by it. If you tell the young man who has just written a fine book or made a fine speech, that he

will not be any happier if he attain to the fame of Milton or the power of Pitt, and that, for the sake of his own happiness, he had much better cultivate a farm, live in the country, and postpone to the last the days of dyspepsia and gout, he will answer you fairly —'I am quite as sensible of that as you are. But I am not thinking whether or not I shall be happy. I have made up my mind to be, if I can, a great author or a prime minister.' So it is with all the active sons of the world. To push on is the law of nature. And you can no more say to men and to nations than to children—'Sit still, and don't wear out your shoes!'"

"Then," said Trevanion, "if I tell you I am not happy, your only answer is, that I obey an inevitable law."

"No! I don't say that it is an inevitable law that man should not be happy; but it is an inevitable law that a man, in spite of himself, should live for something higher than his own happiness. He cannot live in himself or for himself, however egotistical he may try to be. Every desire he has links him with others. Man is not a machine—he is a part of one."

"True, brother, he is a soldier, not an army," said Captain Roland.

"Life is a drama, not a monologue," pursued my father. "Drama is derived from a Greek verb, signifying *to do*. Every actor in the drama has something to do, which helps on the progress of the whole: that is the object for which the author created him. Do your part, and let the Great Play get on."

"Ah!" said Trevanion, briskly, "but to do the part is the difficulty! Every actor helps to the catastrophe, and yet must do his part without knowing how all is to end. Shall he help the curtain to fall on a tragedy or a comedy? Come, I will tell you the one secret of my public life—that which explains all its failure (for, in spite of my position, I have failed), and its regrets—*I want conviction!*"

"Exactly," said my father; "because to every question there are two sides, and you look at them both."

"You have said it," answered Trevanion, smiling also. "For public life a man should be one-sided; he must act with a party; and a party insists that the shield is silver, when, if it will take the trouble to turn the corner, it will see that the reverse of the shield is gold. Woe to the man who makes that discovery alone, while his party are still swearing the shield is silver, and that not once in his life, but every night!"

"You have said quite enough to convince me that you ought not to belong to a party, but not enough to convince me why you should not be happy," said my father.

"Do you remember," said Sir Sedley Beaudesert, "an anecdote of the first Duke of Portland? He had a gallery in the great stable of his villa in Holland, where a concert was given once a week, to *cheer and amuse* his horses! I have no doubt the horses thrived all the better for it. What Trevanion wants is a concert once a week. With him it is always saddle and spur. Yet, after all, who would not envy him? If life

be a drama, his name stands high in the playbill, and is printed in capitals on the walls."

"Envy me!" cried Trevanion—"ME!—no, you are the enviable man—you who have only one grief in the world, and that so absurd a one, that I will make you blush by disclosing it. Hear, O sage Austin!—O sturdy Roland!—Olivares was haunted by a spectre, and Sedley Beaudesert by the dread of old age!"

"Well," said my mother, seriously, "I do think it requires a great sense of religion, or, at all events, children of one's own, in whom one is young again, to reconcile one's-self to becoming old."

"My dear ma'am," said Sir Sedley, who had slightly coloured at Trevanion's charge, but had now recovered his easy self-possession, "you have spoken so admirably, that you give me courage to confess my weakness. I do dread to be old. All the joys of my life have been the joys of youth. I have had so exquisite a pleasure in the mere sense of living, that old age, as it comes near, terrifies me by its dull eyes and grey hairs. I have lived the life of a butterfly. Summer is over, and I see my flowers withering; and my wings are chilled by the first airs of winter. Yes, I envy Trevanion; for, in public life no man is ever young; and, while he can work, he is never old."

"My dear Beaudesert," said my father, "when St Amable, patron saint of Riom, in Auvergne, went to Rome, the sun waited upon him as a servant, carried his cloak and gloves for him in the heat, and kept off the

rain, if the weather changed, like an umbrella. You want to put the sun to the same use; you are quite right; but then, you see, you must first be a saint before you can be sure of the sun as a servant."

Sir Sedley smiled charmingly; but the smile changed to a sigh as he added, "I don't think I should much mind being a saint, if the sun would be my sentinel instead of my courier. I want nothing of him but to stand still. You see he moved even for St Amable. My dear madam, you and I understand each other; and it is a very hard thing to grow old, do what one will to keep young."

"What say you, Roland, of these two malcontents?" asked my father. The captain turned uneasily in his chair, for the rheumatism was gnawing his shoulder, and sharp pains were shooting through his mutilated limb.

"I say," answered Roland, "that these men are wearied with marching from Brentford to Windsor—that they have never known the bivouac and the battle."

Both the grumblers turned their eyes to the veteran: the eyes rested first on the furrowed, care-worn lines in his eagle face—then they fell on the stiff outstretched cork limb—and then they turned away.

Meanwhile my mother had softly risen, and under pretence of looking for her work on the table near him, bent over the old soldier and pressed his hand.

"Gentlemen," said my father, "I don't think my

brother ever heard of Nichocorus, the Greek comic writer; yet he has illustrated him very ably. Saith Nichocorus, 'the best cure for drunkenness is a sudden calamity.' For chronic drunkenness, a continued course of real misfortune must be very salutary!"

No answer came from the two complainants; and my father took up a great book.

CHAPTER II.

"My friends," said my father, looking up from his book, and addressing himself to his two visitors, "I know of one thing, milder than calamity, that would do you both a great deal of good."

"What is that?" asked Sir Sedley.

"A saffron bag, worn at the pit of the stomach!"

"Austin, my dear!" said my mother, reprovingly.

My father did not heed the interruption, but continued, gravely—"Nothing is better for the spirits! Roland is in no want of saffron, because he is a warrior; and the desire of fighting, and the hope of victory, infuse such a heat into the spirits as is profitable for long life, and keeps up the system."

"Tut!" said Trevanion.

"But gentlemen in your predicament must have recourse to artificial means. Nitre in broth, for instance—about three grains to ten—(cattle fed upon nitre grow fat); or earthy odours—such as exist in cucumbers and cabbage. A certain great lord had a clod of fresh earth, laid in a napkin, put under his nose every morning after sleep. Light anointing of the head with oil, mixed with roses and salt, is not bad; but, upon the whole, I prescribe the saffron bag at the——"

"Sisty, my dear, will you look for my scissors?" said my mother.

"What nonsense are you talking! Question! question!" cried Mr Trevanion.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed my father, opening his eyes: "I am giving you the advice of Lord Bacon. You want conviction—conviction comes from passion—passion from the spirits—spirits from a saffron bag. You, Beaudesert, on the other hand, want to keep youth. He keeps youth longest who lives longest. Nothing more conduces to longevity than a saffron bag, provided always it is worn at the——"

"Sisty, my thimble!" said my mother.

"You laugh at us justly," said Beaudesert, smiling; "and the same remedy, I dare say, would cure us both!"

"Yes," said my father, "there is no doubt of that. In the pit of the stomach is that great central web of nerves called the ganglions; thence they affect the head and the heart. Mr Squills proved that to us, Sisty."

"Yes," said I; "but I never heard Mr Squills talk of a saffron bag."

"Oh, foolish boy! it is not the saffron bag—it is the belief in the saffron bag. Apply BELIEF to the centre of the nerves, and all will go well," said my father.

CHAPTER III.

"But it is a devil of a thing to have too nice a conscience!" quoth the member of Parliament.

"And it is not an angel of a thing to lose one's front teeth!" sighed the fine gentleman.

Therewith my father rose, and putting his hand into his waistcoat, *more suo*, delivered his famous

SERMON UPON THE CONNECTION BETWEEN FAITH AND PURPOSE.

Famous it was in our domestic circle. But, as yet, it has not gone beyond. And since the reader, I am sure, does not turn to the Caxton Memoirs with the expectation of finding sermons, so to that circle let its fame be circumscribed. All I shall say about it is, that it was a very fine sermon, and that it proved indisputably, to me at least, the salubrious effects of a saffron bag applied to the great centre of the nervous system. But the wise Ali saith, that "a fool doth not know what maketh him look little, neither will he hearken to him that adviseth him." I cannot assert that my father's friends were fools, but they certainly came under this definition of Folly.

CHAPTER IV.

For therewith arose, not conviction, but discussion; Trevanion was logical, Beaudesert sentimental. My father held firm to the saffron bag. When James the First dedicated to the Duke of Buckingham his meditation on the Lord's Prayer, he gave a very sensible reason for selecting his grace for that honour; "For," saith the king, "it is made upon a very short and plain prayer, and, therefore, the fitter for a courtier, for courtiers are for the most part thought neither to have lust nor leisure to say long prayers; liking best *courte messe et long disner*." I suppose it was for a similar reason that my father persisted in dedicating to the member of Parliament and the fine gentleman this "short and plaine" morality of his—to wit, the saffron bag. He was evidently persuaded, if he could once get them to apply that, it was all that was needful; that they had neither lust nor leisure for longer instructions. And this saffron bag,—it came down with such a whack, at every round in the argument! You would have thought my father one of the old plebeian combatants in the popular ordeal, who, forbidden to use sword and lance, fought with a sand-bag tied to a flail: a very

stunning weapon it was when filled only with sand; but a bag filled with saffron, — it was irresistible! Though my father had two to one against him, they could not stand such a deuce of a weapon. And after tuts and pishes innumerable from Mr Trevanion, and sundry bland grimaces from Sir Sedley Beaudesert, they fairly gave in, though they would not own they were beaten.

"Enough," said the member, "I see that you don't comprehend me; I must continue to move by own impulse."

My father's pet book was the Colloquies of Erasmus; he was wont to say that those Colloquies furnished life with illustrations in every page. Out of the Colloquies of Erasmus he now answered the member:—

"Rabirius, wanting his servant Syrus to get up," quoth my father, "cried out to him to move. 'I do move,' said Syrus. 'I see you move,' replied Rabirius, 'but you *move nothing*.' To return to the saffron bag——"

"Confound the saffron bag!" cried Trevanion, in a rage; and then softening his look as he drew on his gloves, he turned to my mother, and said, with more politeness than was natural to, or at least customary with him—

"By the way, my dear Mrs Caxton, I should tell you that Lady Ellinor comes to town to-morrow, on purpose to call on you. We shall be here some little time, Austin; and though London is so empty, there

are still some persons of note to whom I should like to introduce you, and yours——"

"Nay," said my father; "your world and my world are not the same. Books for me, and men for you. Neither Kitty nor I can change our habits, even for friendship; she has a great piece of work to finish, and so have I. Mountains cannot stir, especially when in labour; but Mahomet can come to the mountain as often as he likes."

Mr Trevanion insisted, and Sir Sedley Beaudesert mildly put in his own claims; both boasted acquaintance with literary men, whom my father would, at all events, be pleased to meet. My father doubted whether he could meet any literary men more eloquent than Cicero, or more amusing than Aristophanes; and observed, that if such did exist, he would rather meet them in their books than in a drawing-room. In fine, he was immovable; and so also, with less argument, was Captain Roland.

Then Mr Trevanion turned to me.

"Your son, at all events, should see something of the world."

My mother's soft eye sparkled.

"My dear friend, I thank you," said my father, touched; "and Pisistratus and I will talk it over."

Our guests had departed. All four of us gathered to the open window, and enjoyed in silence the cool air and the moonlight.

"Austin," said my mother at last, "I fear it is for my sake that you refuse going amongst your old

friends: you knew I should be frightened by such fine people, and——"

"And we have been happy for more than eighteen years without them, Kitty! My poor friends are not happy, and we are. To leave well alone is a golden rule worth all in Pythagoras. The ladies of Bubastis, my dear, a place in Egypt where the cat was worshipped, always kept rigidly aloof from the gentlemen in Athribis, who adored the shrew-mice. Cats are domestic animals,—your shrew-mice are sad gadabouts: you can't find a better model, my Kitty, than the ladies of Bubastis!"

"How Trevanion is altered!" said Roland, musingly —"he who was so lively and ardent!"

"He ran too fast up-hill at first, and has been out of breath ever since," said my father.

"And Lady Ellinor," said Roland, hesitatingly, "shall you see her to-morrow?"

"Yes!" said my father, calmly.

As Captain Roland spoke, something in the tone of his question seemed to flash a conviction on my mother's heart,—the woman there was quick: she drew back, turning pale, even in the moonlight, and fixed her eyes on my father, while I felt her hand, which had clasped mine, tremble convulsively.

I understood her. Yes, this Lady Ellinor was the early rival whose name till then she had not known. She fixed her eyes on my father, and at his tranquil tone and quiet look she breathed more freely, and, sliding her hand from mine, rested it fondly on his

shoulder. A few moments afterwards, I and Captain Roland found ourselves standing alone by the window.

"You are young, nephew," said the Captain; "and you have the name of a fallen family to raise. Your father does well not to reject for you that opening into the great world which Trevanion offers. As for me, my business in London seems over: I cannot find what I came to seek. I have sent for my daughter; when she arrives I shall return to my old tower; and the man and the ruin will crumble away together."

"Tush, uncle! I must work hard and get money; and then we will repair the old tower, and buy back the old estate. My father shall sell the red brick house; we will fit him up a library in the keep; and we will all live united, in peace, and in state, as grand as our ancestors before us."

While I thus spoke, my uncle's eyes were fixed upon a corner of the street, where a figure, half in shade, half in moonlight, stood motionless, "Ah!" said I, following his eye, "I have observed that man, two or three times, pass up and down the street on the other side of the way, and turn his head towards our window. Our guests were with us then, and my father in full discourse, or I should have——"

Before I could finish the sentence, my uncle, stifling an exclamation, broke away, hurried out of the room, stumped down the stairs, and was in the street, while I was yet rooted to the spot with surprise. I remained at the window, and my eye rested on the figure. I

saw the Captain, with his bare head and his grey hair, cross the street; the figure started, turned the corner, and fled.

Then I followed my uncle, and arrived in time to save him from falling: he leant his head on my breast, and I heard him murmur,—"It is he—it is he! He has watched us!—he repents!"

CHAPTER V.

The next day Lady Ellinor called; but, to my great disappointment, without Fanny.

Whether or not some joy at the incident of the previous night had served to rejuvenate my uncle, I know not, but he looked to me ten years younger when Lady Ellinor entered. How carefully the buttoned-up coat was brushed! how new and glossy was the black stock! The poor Captain was restored to his pride, and mighty proud he looked! With a glow on his cheek, and a fire in his eye; his head thrown back, and his whole air composed, severe, Mavortian, and majestic, as if awaiting the charge of the French cuirassiers at the head of his detachment.

My father, on the contrary, was as usual (till dinner, when he always dressed punctiliously, out of respect to his Kitty) in his easy morning-gown and slippers; and nothing but a certain compression in his lips, which had lasted all the morning, evinced his anticipation of the visit, or the emotion it caused him.

Lady Ellinor behaved beautifully. She could not conceal a certain nervous trepidation, when she first took the hand my father extended; and, in touching

rebuke of the Captain's stately bow, she held out to him the hand left disengaged, with a look which brought Roland at once to her side. It was a desertion of his colours to which nothing, short of Ney's shameful conduct at Napoleon's return from Elba, affords a parallel in history. Then, without waiting for introduction, and before a word indeed was said, Lady Ellinor came to my mother so cordially, so caressingly —she threw into her smile, voice, manner, such winning sweetness, that I, intimately learned in my poor mother's simple loving heart, wondered how she refrained from throwing her arms round Lady Ellinor's neck and kissing her outright. It must have been a great conquest over herself not to do it! My turn came next: and talking to me, and about me, soon set all parties at their ease—at least apparently.

What was said I cannot remember; I do not think one of us could. But an hour slipped away, and there was no gap in the conversation.

With curious interest, and a survey I strove to make impartial, I compared Lady Ellinor with my mother. And I comprehended the fascination which the high-born lady must, in their earlier youth, have exercised over both brothers, so dissimilar to each other. For *charm* was the characteristic of Lady Ellinor—a charm indefinable. It was not the mere grace of refined breeding, though that went a great way: it was a charm that seemed to spring from natural sympathy. Whomsoever she addressed, that person appeared for the moment to engage all her attention, to interest her

whole mind. She had a gift of conversation very peculiar. She made what she said like a continuation of what was said to her. She seemed as if she had entered into your thoughts, and talked them aloud. Her mind was evidently cultivated with great care, but she was perfectly void of pedantry. A hint, an allusion, sufficed to show how much she knew, to one well instructed, without mortifying or perplexing the ignorant. Yes, there probably was the only woman my father had ever met who could be the companion to his mind, walk through the garden of knowledge by his side, and trim the flowers while he cleared the vistas. On the other hand, there was an inborn nobility in Lady Ellinor's sentiments that must have struck the most susceptible chord in Roland's nature, and the sentiments took eloquence from the look, the mien, the sweet dignity of the very turn of the head. Yes, she must have been a fitting Oriana to a young Amadis. It was not hard to see that Lady Ellinor was ambitious—that she had a love of fame, for fame itself—that she was proud—that she set value (and that morbidly) on the world's opinion. This was perceptible when she spoke of her husband, even of her daughter. It seemed to me as if she valued the intellect of the one, the beauty of the other, by the gauge of the social distinction it conferred. She took measure of the gift, as I was taught at Dr Herman's to take measure of the height of a tower—by the length of the shadow it cast upon the ground.

My dear father! with such a wife you would never

have lived eighteen years, shivering on the edge of a Great Book.

My dear uncle, with such a wife you would never have been contented with a cork leg and a Waterloo medal! And I understand why Mr Trevanion, "eager and ardent" as ye say he was in youth, with a heart bent on the practical success of life, won the hand of the heiress. Well, you see Mr Trevanion has contrived not to be happy! By the side of my listening, admiring mother, with her blue eyes moist, and her coral lips apart, Lady Ellinor looks faded. Was she ever as pretty as my mother is now? Never. But she was much handsomer. What delicacy in the outline, and yet how decided in spite of the delicacy! The eyebrow so defined—the profile slightly aquiline—so clearly cut—with the curved nostril, which, if physiognomists are right, shows sensibility so keen; and the classic lip, that, but for the neighbouring dimple, would be so haughty. But wear and tear are in that face. The nervous excitable temper has helped the fret and cark of ambitious life. My dear uncle, I know not yet your private life. But as for my father, I am sure that, though he might have done more on earth, he would have been less fit for heaven, if he had married Lady Ellinor.

At last this visit—dreaded, I am sure, by three of the party, was over, but not before I had promised to dine at the Trevanions' that day.

When we were again alone, my father threw off a long breath, and, looking round him cheerfully, said,

"Since Pisistratus deserts us, let us console ourselves for his absence—send for brother Jack, and all four go down to Richmond to drink tea."

"Thank you, Austin," said Roland; "but I don't want it, I assure you!"

"Upon your honour?" said my father in a half-whisper.

"Upon my honour."

"Nor I either! So, my dear Kitty, Roland and I will take a walk, and be back in time to see if that young Anachronism looks as handsome as his new London-made clothes will allow him. Properly speaking, he ought to go with an apple in his hand, and a dove in his bosom. But now I think of it, that was luckily not the fashion with the Athenians till the time of Alcibiades!"

CHAPTER VI.

You may judge of the effect that my dinner at Mr Trevanion's, with a long conversation after it with Lady Ellinor, made upon my mind, when, on my return home, after having satisfied all questions of parental curiosity, I said nervously, and looking down, —"My dear father,—I should like very much, if you have no objection—to—to——"

"What, my dear?" asked my father, kindly.

"Accept an offer Lady Ellinor has made me, on the part of Mr Trevanion. He wants a secretary. He is kind enough to excuse my inexperience, and declares I shall do very well, and can soon get into his ways. Lady Ellinor says (I continued with dignity) that it will be a great opening in public life for me; and at all events, my dear father, I shall see much of the world, and learn what I really think will be more useful to me than anything they will teach me at college."

My mother looked anxiously at my father. "It will indeed be a great thing for Sisty," said she, timidly; and then, taking courage, she added—"and that is just the sort of life he is formed for."

"Hem!" said my uncle.

My father rubbed his spectacles thoughtfully, and replied, after a long pause,—

"You may be right, Kitty: I don't think Pisistratus is meant for study; action will suit him better. But what does this office lead to?"

"Public employment, sir," said I, boldly; "the service of my country."

"If that be the case," quoth Roland, "I have not a word to say. But I should have thought that for a lad of spirit a descendant of the old De Caxtons, the army would have——"

"The army!" exclaimed my mother, clasping her hands, and looking involuntarily at my uncle's cork leg.

"The army!" repeated my father, peevishly. "Bless my soul, Roland, you seem to think man is made for nothing else but to be shot at! You would not like the army, Pisistratus?"

"Why, sir, not if it pained you and my dear mother; otherwise, indeed——"

"Papæ!" said my father, interrupting me. "This all comes of your giving the boy that ambitious, uncomfortable name, Mrs Caxton; what could a Pisistratus be but the plague of one's life? That idea of serving his country is Pisistratus ipsissimus all over. If ever I have another son (*Dii meliora!*) he has only got to be called Eratostratus, and then he will be burning down St Paul's; which I believe was, by the way, first made out of the stones of a temple to Diana! Of the two, certainly, you had better serve your country with

a goose-quill than by poking a bayonet into the ribs of some unfortunate Indian ; I don't think there are any other people whom the service of one's country makes it necessary to kill just at present,—eh, Roland ? "

" It is a very fine field, India," said my uncle, sententiously : " it is the nursery of captains."

" Is it ? Those plants take up a great deal of ground, then, that might be more profitably cultivated. And, indeed, considering that the tallest captains in the world will be ultimately set into a box not above seven feet at the longest, it is astonishing what a quantity of room that species of *arbor mortis* takes in the growing ! However, Pisistratus, to return to your request, I will think it over, and talk to Trevanion."

" Or rather to Lady Ellinor," said I, imprudently ; my mother slightly shivered, and took her hand from mine. I felt cut to the heart by the slip of my own tongue.

" That, I think, your mother could do best," said my father, drily, " if she wants to be quite convinced that somebody will see that your shirts are aired. For I suppose they mean you to lodge at Trevanion's."

" Oh, no ! " cried my mother ; " he might as well go to college then. I thought he was to stay with us ; only go in the morning, but, of course, sleep here."

" If I know anything of Trevanion," said my father, his secretary will be expected to do without sleep. Poor boy ! You don't know what it is you desire. And yet at your age, I "—my father stopped short. " No ! " he renewed abruptly after a long silence, and

as if soliloquising—"No: man is never wrong while he lives for others. The philosopher who contemplates from the rock is a less noble image than the sailor who struggles with the storm. Why should there be two of us? And *could* he be an *alter ego*, even if I wished it? Impossible!" My father turned on his chair, and laying the left leg on the right knee, said smilingly, as he bent down to look me full in the face: But, Pisistratus, will you promise me always to wear the saffron bag?"

CHAPTER VII.

I now make a long stride in my narrative. I am domesticated with the Trevanions. A very short conversation with the statesman sufficed to decide my father; and the pith of it lay in this single sentence uttered by Trevanion—"I promise you one thing—he shall never be idle!"

Looking back, I am convinced that my father was right, and that he understood my character, and the temptations to which I was most prone, when he consented to let me resign college and enter thus prematurely on the world of men. I was naturally so joyous, that I should have made college life a holiday, and then, in repentance, worked myself into a phthisis.

And my father, too, was right, that, though I could study, I was not meant for a student.

After all, the thing was an experiment. I had time to spare: if the experiment failed, a year's delay would not necessarily be a year's loss.

I am ensconced, then, at Mr Trevanion's. I have been there some months—it is late in the winter; parliament and the season have commenced. I work

hard — Heaven knows harder than I should have worked at college. Take a day for sample.

Trevanion gets up at eight o'clock, and in all weathers rides an hour before breakfast; at nine he takes that meal in his wife's dressing-room; at half-past nine he comes into his study. By that time he expects to find done by his secretary the work I am about to describe.

On coming home, or rather before going to bed, which is usually after three o'clock, it is Mr Trevanion's habit to leave on the table of the said study a list of directions for the secretary. The following, which I take at random from many I have preserved, may show their multifarious nature:—

1. Look out in the Reports (Committee House of Lords) for the last seven years—all that is said about the growth of flax—mark the passages for me.

2. Do. do.—"Irish Emigration."

3. Hunt out second volume of Kames's History of Man, passage containing "Reid's Logic"—don't know where the book is!

4. How does the line beginning "Lumina conjurent, inter" something, end? Is it in Gray? See!

5. Fracastorius writes—"Quantum hoc *infecit* vitium, quot adiverit urbes." Query, ought it not in strict grammar to be—*infecerit* instead of *infecit*? If you don't know, write to father.

6. Write the four letters in full from the notes I leave, *i.e.* about the Ecclesiastical Courts.

7. Look out Population Returns—strike average of last five years (between mortality and births) in Devonshire and Lancashire.

8. Answer these six begging letters, "No"—civilly.

9. The other six, to constituents—"that I have no interest with Government."

10. See, if you have time, whether any of the new books on the round table are not trash.

11. I want to know ALL about Indian corn?

12. Longinus says something, somewhere, in regret for uncon-

genial pursuits (public life, I suppose)—what is it? N.B. Longinus is not in my London Catalogue, but is here, I know—I think in a box in the lumber-room.

13. Set right the calculation I leave on the poor-rates. I have made a blunder somewhere. &c. &c.

Certainly my father knew Mr Trevanion; he never expected a secretary to sleep! To get through the work required of me by half-past nine, I get up by candle-light. At half-past nine I am still hunting for Longinus, when Mr Trevanion comes in with a bundle of letters.

Answers to half the said letters fall to my share. Directions verbal—in a species of short-hand talk. While I write, Mr Trevanion reads the newspapers—examines what I have done—makes notes therefrom, some for Parliament, some for conversation, some for correspondence—skims over the Parliamentary papers of the morning—and jots down directions for extracting, abridging, and comparing them with others, perhaps twenty years old. At eleven he walks down to a Committee of the House of Commons—leaving me plenty to do—till half-past three, when he returns. At four, Fanny puts her head into the room—and I lose mine. Four days in the week Mr Trevanion then disappears for the rest of the day—dines at Bellamy's or a club—expects me at the House at eight o'clock, in case he thinks of something, wants a fact or a quotation. He then releases me—generally with a fresh list of instructions. But I have my holidays, nevertheless. On Wednesdays and Saturdays Mr Tre-

vanion gives dinners, and I meet the most eminent men of the day—on both sides. For Trevanion is on both sides himself—or no side at all, which comes to the same thing. On Tuesdays, Lady Ellinor gives me a ticket for the Opera, and I get there at least in time for the ballet. I have already invitations enough to balls and soirées, for I am regarded as an only son of great expectations. I am treated as becomes a Caxton who has the right, if he pleases, to put a De before his name. I have grown very smart. I have taken a passion for dress, natural to eighteen. I like everything I do, and every one about me. I am over head and ears in love with Fanny Trevanion—who breaks my heart, nevertheless; for she flirts with two peers, a life-guardsman, three old members of parliament, Sir Sedley Beaudesert, one ambassador, and all his attachés, and, positively (the audacious minx!) with a bishop, in full wig and apron, who, people say, means to marry again.

Pisistratus has lost colour and flesh. His mother says he is very much improved,—*that* he takes to be the natural effect produced by Stultz and Hoby. Uncle Jack says he is "fined down."

His father looks at him and writes to Trevanion,—

"Dear T.—I refused a salary for my son. Give him a horse, and two hours a day to ride it. Yours, A. C."

The next day I am master of a pretty bay mare, and riding by the side of Fanny Trevanion. Alas! alas!

CHAPTER VIII.

I HAVE not mentioned my Uncle Roland. He is gone—abroad—to fetch his daughter. He has stayed longer than was expected. Does he seek his son still —there as here? My father has finished the first portion of his work, in two great volumes. Uncle Jack, who for some time has been looking melancholy, and who now seldom stirs out, except on Sundays (on which days we all meet at my father's and dine together) —Uncle Jack, I say, has undertaken to sell it.

"Don't be over sanguine," says Uncle Jack, as he locks up the MS. in two red boxes with a slit in the lids, which belonged to one of the defunct companies. "Don't be over sanguine as to the price. These publishers never venture much on a first experiment. They must be talked even into looking at the book."

"Oh!" said my father, "if they will publish it at all, and at their own risk, I should not stand out for any other terms. 'Nothing great,' said Dryden, 'ever came from a venal pen!'"

"An uncommonly foolish observation of Dryden's," returned Uncle Jack: "he ought to have known better."

"So he did," said I, "for he used his pen to fill his pockets—poor man!"

"But the pen was not venal, master Anachronism," said my father. "A baker is not to be called venal if he sells his loaves—he is venal if he sells himself: Dryden only sold his loaves."

"And we must sell yours," said Uncle Jack, emphatically. "A thousand pounds the volume will be about the mark, eh?"

"A thousand pounds a volume!" cried my father. "Gibbon, I fancy, did not receive more."

"Very likely; Gibbon had not an Uncle Jack to look after his interests," said Mr Tibbets, laughing and rubbing those smooth hands of his. "No! two thousand pounds the two volumes! a sacrifice, but still I recommend moderation."

"I should be happy, indeed, if the book brought in anything," said my father, evidently fascinated; "for that young gentleman is rather expensive; and you, my dear Jack;—perhaps half the sum may be of use to you!"

"To me! my dear brother," cried Uncle Jack—"to me! why when my new speculation has succeeded, I shall be a millionnaire!"

"Have you a new speculation, uncle?" said I, anxiously. "What is it?"

"Mum!" said my uncle, putting his finger to his lip, and looking all round the room—"Mum!! Mum!!"

PISISTRATUS.—"A Grand National Company for blowing up both Houses of Parliament!"

Mr Caxton.—"Upon my life, I hope something newer than that; for they, to judge by the newspapers, don't want brother Jack's assistance to blow up each other!"

Uncle Jack (mysteriously).—"Newspapers! you don't often read a newspaper, Austin Caxton!"

Mr Caxton.—"Granted, John Tibbets!"

Uncle Jack.—"But if my speculation make you read a newspaper every day?"

Mr Caxton (astounded).—"Make me read a newspaper every day!"

Uncle Jack (warming, and expanding his hands to the fire).—"As big as the *Times!*"

Mr Caxton (uneasily).—"Jack, you alarm me!"

Uncle Jack.—"And make you write in it too—a leader!"

Mr Caxton, pushing back his chair, seizes the only weapon at his command, and hurls at Uncle Jack a great sentence of Greek—"Τους μεν γαρ ειναι χαλεπους, ὁσε και ανθρωποφαγειν!"*

Uncle Jack (nothing daunted).—"Ay, and put as much Greek as you like into it!"

Mr Caxton (relieved and softening).—"My dear Jack, you are a great man—let us hear you!"

Then Uncle Jack began. Now, perhaps my readers may have remarked that this illustrious speculator was

* "Some were so barbarous as to eat their own species." The sentence refers to the Scythians, and is in Strabo. I mention the authority, for Strabo is not an author that any man engaged on a less work than the History of Human Error is expected to have by heart

really fortunate in his ideas. His speculations in themselves always had something sound in the kernel, considering how barren they were in the fruit; and this it was that made him so dangerous. The idea Uncle Jack had now got hold of will, I am convinced, make a man's fortune one of these days; and I relate it with a sigh, in thinking how much has gone out of the family. Know, then, it was nothing less than setting up a daily paper on the plan of the *Times*, but devoted entirely to Art, Literature, and Science—*Mental* Progress, in short; I say on the plan of the *Times*, for it was to imitate the mighty machinery of that diurnal illuminator. It was to be the Literary Salmoneus of the Political Jupiter, and rattle its thunder over the bridge of knowledge. It was to have correspondents in all parts of the globe; everything that related to the chronicle of the mind, from the labour of the missionary in the South Sea Islands, or the research of a traveller in pursuit of that mirage called Timbuctoo, to the last new novel at Paris, or the last great emendation of a Greek particle at a German university, was to find a place in this focus of light. It was to amuse, to instruct, to interest—there was nothing it was not to do. Not a man in the whole reading public, not only of the three kingdoms, not only of the British empire, but under the cope of heaven, that it was not to touch somewhere, in head, in heart, or in pocket. The most crotchety member of the intellectual community might find his own hobby in those stables.

"Think," cried Uncle Jack,—"think of the march

of mind—think of the passion for cheap knowledge—think how little quarterly, monthly, weekly journals can keep pace with the main wants of the age. As well have a weekly journal on politics, as a weekly journal on all the matters still more interesting than politics to the mass of the public. My Literary Times once started, people will wonder how they had ever lived without it! Sir, they have not lived without it—they have vegetated—they have lived in holes and caves, like the Troggledikes."

"Troglodytes," said my father, mildly—"from *trogle*, a cave—and *dumi*, to go under. They lived in Ethiopia, and had their wives in common."

"As to the last point, I don't say that the public, poor creatures, are as bad as that," said Uncle Jack, candidly; "but no simile holds good in all its points. And the public are no less Troggledummies, or whatever you call them, compared with what they will be when living under the full light of my Literary Times. Sir, it will be a revolution in the world. It will bring literature out of the clouds into the parlour, the cottage, the kitchen. The idlest dandy, the finest fine lady, will find something to her taste; the busiest man of the mart and counter will find some acquisition to his practical knowledge. The practical man will see the progress of divinity, medicine, nay, even law. Sir, the Indian will read me under the banyan; I shall be in the seraglios of the East; and over my sheets the American Indian will smoke the calumet of peace. We shall reduce politics to its proper level in the affairs of life—

raise literature to its due place in the thoughts and business of men. It is a grand thought; and my heart swells with pride while I contemplate it!"

"My dear Jack," said my father, seriously, and rising with emotion, "it *is* a grand thought, and I honour you for it. You are quite right—it would be a revolution! It would educate mankind insensibly. Upon my life, I should be proud to write a leader, or a paragraph. Jack, you will immortalise yourself!"

"I believe I shall," said Uncle Jack, modestly; "but I have not said a word yet on the greatest attraction of all."

"Ah! and that?"

"THE ADVERTISEMENTS!" cried my uncle, spreading his hands with all the fingers at angles, like the threads of a spider's web. "The advertisements—oh, think of them!—a perfect *El Dorado*. The advertisements, sir, on the most moderate calculation, will bring us in £50,000 a-year. My dear Pisistratus, I shall never marry; you are my heir. Embrace me!"

So saying, my Uncle Jack threw himself upon me, and squeezed out of breath the prudential demur that was rising to my lips.

My poor mother, between laughing and sobbing, faltered out—"And it is *my* brother who will pay back to *his* son all—all he gave up for me!"

While my father walked to and fro the room, more excited than ever I saw him before, muttering, "A sad useless dog I have been hitherto! I should like to serve the world! I should indeed!"

Uncle Jack had fairly done it this time. He had found out the only bait in the world to catch so shy a carp as my father—"*hæret lethalis arundo.*" I saw that the deadly hook was within an inch of my father's nose, and that he was gazing at it with a fixed determination to swallow.

But if it amused my father? Boy that I was, I saw no further. I must own I myself was dazzled, and, perhaps with childlike malice, delighted at the perturbation of my betters. The young carp was pleased to see the waters so playfully in movement, when the old carp waved his tail, and swayed himself on his fins.

"Mum!" said Uncle Jack, releasing me: "not a word to Mr Trevanion, to any one."

"But why?"

"Why? God bless my soul. Why? If my scheme gets wind, do you suppose some one will not clap on sail to be before me? You frighten me out of my senses. Promise me faithfully to be silent as the grave."

"I should like to hear Trevanion's opinion too."

"As well hear the town-crier! Sir, I have trusted to your honour. Sir, at the domestic hearth all secrets are sacred. Sir, I——"

"My dear Uncle Jack, you have said quite enough. Not a word will I breathe!"

"I am sure you may trust him, Jack," said my mother.

"And I do trust him—with wealth untold," replied my uncle. "May I ask you for a little water—with a trifle of brandy in it—and a biscuit, or indeed a sandwich. This talking makes me quite hungry."

My eye fell upon Uncle Jack as he spoke. Poor Uncle Jack, he had grown thin!

PART SEVENTH.

CHAPTER I.

Saith Dr Luther, "When I saw Dr Gode begin to tell his puddings hanging in the chimney, I told him he would not live long!"

I wish I had copied that passage from "The Table Talk" in large round hand, and set it before my father at breakfast, the morn preceding that fatal eve in which Uncle Jack persuaded him to tell his puddings.

Yet, now I think of it, Uncle Jack hung the puddings in the chimney,—but he did not persuade my father to tell them.

Beyond a vague surmise that half the suspended "tomacula" would furnish a breakfast to Uncle Jack, and that the youthful appetite of Pisistratus would despatch the rest, my father did not give a thought to the nutritious properties of the puddings,—in other words, to the two thousand pounds which, thanks to Mr Tibbets, dangled down the chimney. So far as the Great Work was concerned, my father only cared for

its publication, not its profits. I will not say that he might not hunger for praise, but I am quite sure that he did not care a button for pudding. Nevertheless, it was an infaust and sinister augury for Austin Caxton, the very appearance, the very suspension and danglement of any puddings whatsoever, right over his inglenook, when those puddings were made by the sleek hands of Uncle Jack! None of the puddings which he, poor man, had all his life been stringing, whether from his own chimneys, or the chimneys of other people, had turned out to be real puddings,—they had always been the *eidola*, the *erscheinungen*, the phantoms and semblances of puddings. I question if Uncle Jack knew much about Democritus of Abdera. But he was certainly tainted with the philosophy of that fanciful sage. He peopled the air with images of colossal stature which impressed all his dreams and divinations, and from whose influences came his very sensations and thoughts. His whole being, asleep or waking, was thus but the reflection of great phantom puddings!

As soon as Mr Tibbets had possessed himself of the two volumes of the "History of Human Error," he had necessarily established that hold upon my father which hitherto those lubricate hands of his had failed to effect. He had found what he had so long sighed for in vain, his *point d'appui*, wherein to fix the Archimedian screw. He fixed it tight in the "History of Human Error," and moved the Caxtonian world.

A day or two after the conversation recorded in my last chapter, I saw Uncle Jack coming out of the ma-

hogany doors of my father's banker; and, from that time, there seemed no reason why Mr Tibbets should not visit his relations on week-days as well as Sundays. Not a day, indeed, passed but what he held long conversations with my father. He had much to report of his interviews with the publishers. In these conversations he naturally recurred to that grand idea of the "Literary Times," which had so dazzled my poor father's imagination; and, having heated the iron, Uncle Jack was too knowing a man not to strike while it was hot.

When I think of the simplicity my wise father exhibited in this crisis of his life, I must own that I am less moved by pity than admiration for that poor great-hearted student. We have seen that out of the learned indolence of twenty years, the ambition which is the instinct of a man of genius had emerged; the serious preparation of the Great Book for the perusal of the world, had insensibly restored the claims of that noisy world on the silent individual. And therewith came a noble remorse that he had hitherto done so little for his species. Was it enough to write quartos upon the past history of Human Error? Was it not his duty, when the occasion was fairly presented, to enter upon that present, daily, hourly war with Error—which is the sworn chivalry of Knowledge? St George did not dissect dead dragons, he fought the live one. And London, with that magnetic atmosphere which in great capitals fills the breath of life with stimulating particles, had its share in quickening the slow pulse of the

student. In the country, he read but his old authors, and lived with them through the gone ages. In the city, my father, during the intervals of repose from the Great Book, and still more now that the Great Book had come to a pause,—inspected the literature of his own time. It had a prodigious effect upon him. He was unlike the ordinary run of scholars, and, indeed, of readers for that matter—who, in their superstitious homage to the dead, are always willing enough to sacrifice the living. He did justice to the marvellous fertility of intellect which characterises the authorship of the present age. By the present age, I do not only mean the present day, I commence with the century. "What," said my father one day in dispute with Trevanion—"what characterises the literature of our time is—its *human interest*. It is true that we do not see scholars addressing scholars, but men addressing men,—not that scholars are fewer, but that the reading public is more large. Authors in all ages address themselves to what interests their readers; the same things do not interest a vast community which interested half a score of monks or book-worms. The literary *polis* was once an oligarchy, it is now a republic. It is the general brilliancy of the atmosphere which prevents your noticing the size of any particular star. Do you not see that with the cultivation of the masses has awakened the Literature of the affections? Every sentiment finds an expositor, every feeling an oracle. Like Epimenides, I have been sleeping in a cave; and, waking, I see those whom I left children are bearded men;

and towns have sprung up in the landscapes which I left as solitary wastes."

Thence the reader may perceive the causes of the change which had come over my father. As Robert Hall says, I think of Dr Kippis, "he had laid so many books at the top of his head, that the brains could not move." But the electricity had now penetrated the heart, and the quickened vigour of that noble organ enabled the brain to stir. Meanwhile, I leave my father to these influences, and to the continuous conversations of Uncle Jack, and proceed with the thread of my own egotism.

Thanks to Mr Trevanion, my habits were not those which favour friendships with the idle, but I formed some acquaintances amongst young men a few years older than myself, who held subordinate situations in the public offices, or were keeping their terms for the bar. There was no want of ability amongst these gentlemen; but they had not yet settled into the stern prose of life. Their busy hours only made them more disposed to enjoy the hours of relaxation. And when we got together, a very gay, light-hearted set we were! We had neither money enough to be very extravagant, nor leisure enough to be very dissipated; but we amused ourselves notwithstanding. My new friends were wonderfully erudite in all matters connected with the theatres. From an opera to a ballet, from Hamlet to the last farce from the French, they had the literature of the stage at the finger-ends of their straw-coloured gloves. They had a pretty large acquaintance with actors

and actresses, and were perfect *Walpoluli* in the minor scandals of the day. To do them justice, however, they were not indifferent to the more masculine knowledge necessary in "this wrong world." They talked as familiarly of the real actors of life as of the sham ones. They could adjust to a hair the rival pretensions of contending statesmen. They did not profess to be deep in the mysteries of foreign cabinets (with the exception of one young gentleman connected with the Foreign Office, who prided himself on knowing exactly what the Russians meant to do with India—when they got it); but, to make amends, the majority of them had penetrated the closest secrets of our own. It is true that, according to a proper subdivision of labour, each took some particular member of the government for his special observation; just as the most skilful surgeons, however profoundly versed in the general structure of our frame, rest their anatomical fame on the light they throw on particular parts of it—one man taking the brain, another the duodenum, a third the spinal cord, while a fourth, perhaps, is a master of all the symptoms indicated by a pensile finger. Accordingly, one of my friends appropriated to himself the Home Department; another the Colonies; and a third, whom we all regarded as a future Talleyrand (or a De Retz at least), had devoted himself to the special study of Sir Robert Peel, and knew, by the way in which that profound and inscrutable statesman threw open his coat, every thought that was passing in his breast! Whether lawyers or officials, they all had a great idea of themselves—high notions of

what they were to *be*, rather than what they were to *do*, some day. As the king of modern fine gentlemen said of himself, in paraphrase of Voltaire, "they had letters in their pockets addressed to Posterity—which the chances were, however, that they might forget to deliver." Somewhat "priggish" most of them might be; but, on the whole, they were far more interesting than mere idle men of pleasure. There was about them, as features of a general family likeness, a redundant activity of life—a gay exuberance of ambition—a light-hearted earnestness when at work—a schoolboy's enjoyment of the hours of play.

A great contrast to these young men was Sir Sedley Beaudesert, who was pointedly kind to me, and whose bachelor's house was always open to me after noon: Sir Sedley was visible to no one but his valet, before that hour. A perfect bachelor's house it was, too—with its windows opening on the Park, and sofas niched into the windows, on which you might loll at your ease, like the philosopher in Lucretius,—

> "Despicere unde queas alios, passimque videre,
> Errare,"—

and see the gay crowds ride to and fro Rotten Row—without the fatigue of joining them, especially if the wind was in the east.

There was no affectation of costliness about the rooms, but a wonderful accumulation of comfort. Every patent chair that proffered a variety in the art of lounging found its place there; and near every chair a little

table, on which you might deposit your book or your coffee-cup, without the trouble of moving more than your hand. In winter, nothing warmer than the quilted curtains and Axminster carpets can be conceived. In summer, nothing airier and cooler than the muslin draperies and the Indian mattings. And I defy a man to know to what perfection dinner may be brought, unless he had dined with Sir Sedley Beaudesert. Certainly, if that distinguished personage had but been an egotist, he had been the happiest of men. But, unfortunately for him, he was singularly amiable and kind-hearted. He had the *bonne digestion*, but not the other requisite for worldly felicity—the *mauvais cœur*. He felt a sincere pity for every one else who lived in rooms without patent chairs and little coffee-tables—whose windows did not look on the Park, with sofas niched into their recesses. As Henry IV. wished every man to have his *pot au feu*, so Sir Sedley Beaudesert, if he could have had his way, would have every man served with an early cucumber for his fish, and a caraffe of iced water by the side of his bread and cheese. He thus evinced on politics a naïve simplicity, which delightfully contrasted his acuteness on matters of taste. I remember his saying, in a discussion on the Beer Bill, "The poor ought not to be allowed to drink beer, it is so particularly rheumatic! The best drink in hard work is dry champagne—(not *mousseux*)—I found that out when I used to shoot on the moors."

Indolent as Sir Sedley was, he had contrived to open an extraordinary number of drains on his wealth.

First, as a landed proprietor, there was no end to applications from distressed farmers, aged poor, benefit societies, and poachers he had thrown out of employment by giving up his preserves to please his tenants.

Next, as a man of pleasure, the whole race of womankind had legitimate demands on him. From a distressed duchess, whose picture lay *perdu* under a secret spring of his snuff-box, to a decayed laundress, to whom he might have paid a compliment on the perfect involutions of a frill, it was quite sufficient to be a daughter of Eve to establish a just claim on Sir Sedley's inheritance from Adam.

Again, as an amateur of art, and a respectful servant of every muse, all whom the public had failed to patronise—painter, actor, poet, musician—turned, like dying sunflowers to the sun, towards the pitying smile of Sir Sedley Beaudesert. Add to these the general miscellaneous multitude, who "had heard of Sir Sedley's high character for benevolence," and one may well suppose what a very costly reputation he had set up. In fact, though Sir Sedley could not spend on what might fairly be called "himself," a fifth part of his very handsome income, I have no doubt that he found it difficult to make both ends meet at the close of the year. That he did so, he owed perhaps to two rules which his philosophy had peremptorily adopted. He never made debts, and he never gambled. For both these admirable aberrations from the ordinary routine of fine gentlemen, I believe he was indebted to the softness of his disposition. He had a great compassion

for a wretch who was dunned. "Poor fellow!" he would say, "it must be so painful to him to pass his life in saying No." So little did he know about that class of promisers—as if a man dunned ever said No. As Beau Brummell, when asked if he was fond of vegetables, owned that he had once eat a pea, so Sir Sedley Beaudesert owned that he had once played high at piquet. "I was so unlucky as to win," said he, referring to that indiscretion, "and I shall never forget the anguish on the face of the man who paid me. Unless I could always lose, it would be a perfect purgatory to play."

Now nothing could be more different in their kinds of benevolence than Sir Sedley and Mr Trevanion. Mr Trevanion had a great contempt for individual charity. He rarely put his hand into his purse—he drew a great check on his bankers. Was a congregation without a church, or a village without a school, or a river without a bridge, Mr Trevanion set to work on calculations, found out the exact sum required by an algebraic x—y, and paid it as he would have paid his butcher. It must be owned that the distress of a man, whom he allowed to be deserving, did not appeal to him in vain. But it is astonishing how little he spent in that way; for it was hard indeed to convince Mr Trevanion that a deserving man ever was in such distress as to want charity.

That Trevanion, nevertheless, did infinitely more real good than Sir Sedley, I believe; but he did it as a mental operation—by no means as an impulse from the

heart. I am sorry to say that the main difference was this,—distress always seemed to accumulate round Sir Sedley, and vanish from the presence of Trevanion. Where the last came, with his busy, active, searching mind, energy woke, improvement sprang up. Where the first came, with his warm kind heart, a kind of torpor spread under its rays; people lay down and basked in the liberal sunshine. Nature in one broke forth like a brisk sturdy winter, in the other like a lazy Italian summer. Winter is an excellent invigorator, no doubt, but we all love summer better.

Now, it is a proof how lovable Sir Sedley was, that I loved him, and yet was jealous of him. Of all the satellites round my fair Cynthia, Fanny Trevanion, I dreaded most this amiable luminary. It was in vain for me to say with the insolence of youth that Sir Sedley Beaudesert was of the same age as Fanny's father;—to see them together, he might have passed for Trevanion's son. No one amongst the younger generation was half so handsome as Sedley Beaudesert. He might be eclipsed at first sight by the showy effect of more redundant locks and more brilliant bloom; but he had but to speak, to smile, in order to throw a whole cohort of dandies into the shade. It was the expression of his countenance that was so bewitching; there was something so kindly in its easy candour, its benign good-nature. And he understood women so well! He flattered their foibles so insensibly; he commanded their affection with so gracious a dignity. Above all, what with his accomplishments, his peculiar

reputation, his long celibacy, and the soft melancholy of his sentiments, he always contrived to *interest* them. There was not a charming woman by whom this charming man did not seem just on the point of being caught! It was like the sight of a splendid trout in a transparent stream, sailing pensively to and fro your fly, in a will-and-a-won't sort of way. Such a trout! it would be a thousand pities to leave him, when evidently so well disposed! That trout, fair maid or gentle widow, would have kept you—whipping the stream and dragging the fly—from morning to dewy eve. Certainly I don't wish worse to my bitterest foe of five-and-twenty than such a rival as Sedley Beaudesert at seven-and-forty.

Fanny, indeed, perplexed me horribly. Sometimes I fancied she liked me; but the fancy scarce thrilled me with delight, before it vanished in the frost of a careless look, or the cold beam of a sarcastic laugh. Spoiled darling of the world as she was, she seemed so innocent in her exuberant happiness, that one forgot all her faults in that atmosphere of joy which she diffused around her. And, despite her pretty insolence, she had so kind a woman's heart below the surface! When she once saw that she had pained you, she was so soft, so winning, so humble, till she had healed the wound. But *then*, if she saw she had pleased you too much, the little witch was never easy till she had plagued you again. As heiress to so rich a father, or rather perhaps mother (for the fortune came from Lady

Ellinor), she was naturally surrounded with admirers not wholly disinterested. She did right to plague *them* —but ME! Poor boy that I was, why should I seem more disinterested than others! how should she perceive all that lay hid in my young deep heart? Was I not in all worldly pretensions the least worthy of her admirers, and might I not seem, therefore, the most mercenary? I who never thought of her fortune, or if that thought did come across me, it was to make me start and turn pale! And then it vanished at her first glance, as a ghost from the dawn. How hard it is to convince youth, that sees all the world of the future before it, and covers that future with golden palaces, of the inequalities of life! In my fantastic and sublime romance, I looked out into that Great Beyond, saw myself orator, statesman, minister, ambassador—Heaven knows what—laying laurels, which I mistook for rent-rolls, at Fanny's feet.

Whatever Fanny might have discovered as to the state of my heart, it seemed an abyss not worth prying into by either Trevanion or Lady Ellinor. The first, indeed, as may be supposed, was too busy to think of such trifles. And Lady Ellinor treated me as a mere boy—almost like a boy of her own, she was so kind to me. But she did not notice much the things that lay immediately around her. In brilliant conversation with poets, wits, and statesmen—in sympathy with the toils of her husband—or proud schemes for his aggrandisement, Lady Ellinor lived a life of excitement.

Those large eager shining eyes of hers, bright with some feverish discontent, looked far abroad as if for new worlds to conquer—the world at her feet escaped from her vision. She loved her daughter, she was proud of her, trusted in her with a superb repose—she did not watch over her. Lady Ellinor stood alone on a mountain, and amidst a cloud.

CHAPTER II.

One day the Trevanions had all gone into the country, on a visit to a retired minister distantly related to Lady Ellinor, and who was one of the few persons Trevanion himself condescended to consult. I had almost a holiday. I went to call on Sir Sedley Beaudesert.—I had always longed to sound him on one subject, and had never dared. This time I resolved to pluck up courage.

"Ah, my young friend!" said he, rising from the contemplation of a villanous picture by a young artist, which he had just benevolently purchased, "I was thinking of you this morning.—Wait a moment, Summers (this to the valet). Be so good as to take this picture, let it be packed up and go down into the country. It is a sort of picture," he added, turning to me, "that requires a large house. I have an old gallery with little casements that let in no light. It is astonishing how convenient I have found it!" As soon as the picture was gone, Sir Sedley drew a long breath, as if relieved; and resumed more gaily—

"Yes, I was thinking of you; and if you will forgive any interference in your affairs—from your father's

old friend—I should be greatly honoured by your permission to ask Trevanion what he supposes is to be the ultimate benefit of the horrible labours he inflicts upon you."

"But, my dear Sir Sedley, I like the labours; I am perfectly contented."

"Not to remain always secretary to one who, if there were no business to be done among men, would set about teaching the ants to build hills upon better architectural principles! My dear sir, Trevanion is an awful man, a stupendous man—one *catches fatigue* if one is in the same room with him three minutes! At your age, an age that ought to be so happy," continued Sir Sedley, with a compassion perfectly angelic, "it is sad to see so little enjoyment!"

"But, Sir Sedley, I assure you that you are mistaken. I thoroughly enjoy myself; and have I not heard even you confess that one may be idle and not happy?"

"I did not confess that till I was on the wrong side of forty!" said Sir Sedley, with a slight shade on his brow.

"Nobody would ever think you were on the wrong side of forty!" said I, with artful flattery, winding into my subject. "Miss Trevanion for instance?"

I paused. Sir Sedley looked hard at me, from his bright dark-blue eyes. "Well, Miss Trevanion for instance?"

"Miss Trevanion, who has all the best-looking fellows in London round her, evidently prefers you to any of them."

I said this with a great gulp. I was obstinately bent on plumbing the depth of my own fears.

Sir Sedley rose; he laid his hand kindly on mine, and said, "Do not let Fanny Trevanion torment you even more than her father does!"

"I don't understand you, Sir Sedley!"

"But if I understand you, that is more to the purpose. A girl like Miss Trevanion is cruel till she discovers she has a heart. It is not safe to risk one's own with any woman till she has ceased to be a coquette. My dear young friend, if you took life less in earnest, I should spare you the pain of these hints. Some men sow flowers, some plant trees—you are planting a tree under which you will soon find that no flower will grow. Well and good, if the tree could last to bear fruit and give shade; but beware lest you have to tear it up one day or other; for then—what then? why you will find your whole life plucked away with its roots!"

Sir Sedley said these last words with so serious an emphasis, that I was startled from the confusion I had felt at the former part of his address. He paused long, tapped his snuff-box, inhaled a pinch slowly, and continued, with his more accustomed sprightliness:

"Go as much as you can into the world—again I say 'enjoy yourself.' And again I ask, what is all this labour to do for you? On some men, far less eminent than Trevanion, it would impose a duty to aid you in a practical career, to secure you a public employment—not so on him. He would not mortgage an inch of his independence by asking a favour from a minister. He

so thinks occupation the delight of life, that he occupies you out of pure affection. He does not trouble his head about your future. He supposes your father will provide for *that*, and does not consider that meanwhile your work leads to nothing! Think over all this. I have now bored you enough."

I was bewildered—I was dumb: these practical men of the world, how they take us by surprise! Here had I come to *sound* Sir Sedley, and here was I plumbed, gauged, measured, turned inside out, without having got an inch beyond the surface of that smiling *débonnaire*, unruffled ease. Yet with his invariable delicacy, in spite of all this horrible frankness, Sir Sedley had not said a word to wound what he might think the more sensitive part of my *amour propre*—not a word as to the inadequacy of my pretensions to think seriously of Fanny Trevanion. Had we been the Celadon and Chloë of a country village, he could not have regarded us as more equal, so far as the world went. And for the rest, he rather insinuated that poor Fanny, the great heiress, was not worthy of me, than that I was not worthy of Fanny.

I felt that there was no wisdom in stammering and blushing out denials and equivocations; so I stretched my hand to Sir Sedley, took up my hat,—and went. Instinctively I bent my way to my father's house. I had not been there for many days. Not only had I had a great deal to do in the way of business, but I am ashamed to say that pleasure itself had so entangled my leisure hours, and Miss Trevanion especially so absorbed

them, that, without even uneasy foreboding, I had left my father fluttering his wings more feebly and feebly in the web of Uncle Jack. When I arrived in Russell Street, I found the fly and the spider cheek-by-jowl together. Uncle Jack sprang up at my entrance, and cried, "Congratulate your father. Congratulate *him!* —no; congratulate the world!"

"What, uncle!" said I, with a dismal effort at sympathising liveliness, "is the 'Literary Times' launched at last?"

"Oh, that is all settled—settled long since. Here's a specimen of the type we have chosen for the leaders." And Uncle Jack, whose pocket was never without a wet sheet of some kind or other, drew forth a steaming papyral monster, which in point of size was to the political "Times" as a mammoth may be to an elephant. "That is all settled. We are only preparing our contributors, and shall put out our programme next week or the week after. No, Pisistratus, I mean the Great Work."

"My dear father, I am so glad. What! it is really sold, then?"

"Hum!" said my father.

"Sold!" burst forth Uncle Jack. "Sold—no sir, we would not sell it! No: if all the booksellers fell down on their knees to us, as they will some day, that book should not be sold! Sir, that book is a revolution—it is an era—it is the emancipator of genius from mercenary thraldom;—THAT BOOK!"

I looked inquiringly from uncle to father, and men-

tally retracted my congratulations. Then Mr Caxton, slightly blushing, and shyly rubbing his spectacles, said, "You see, Pisistratus, that though poor Jack has devoted uncommon pains to induce the publishers to recognise the merit he has discovered in the 'History of Human Error,' he has failed to do so."

"Not a bit of it; they all acknowledge its miraculous learning—its——"

"Very true; but they don't think it will sell, and therefore most selfishly refuse to buy it. One bookseller, indeed, offered to treat for it if I would leave out all about the Hottentots and Caffres, the Greek philosophers and Egyptian priests, and, confining myself solely to polite society, entitle the work 'Anecdotes of the Courts of Europe, ancient and modern.'"

"The wretch!" groaned Uncle Jack.

"Another thought it might be cut up into little essays, leaving out the quotations, entitled 'Men and Manners.' A third was kind enough to observe, that though this particular work was quite unsaleable, yet, as I appeared to have some historical information, he should be happy to undertake an historical romance from 'my graphic pen'—that was the phrase, was it not, Jack?"

Jack was too full to speak.

—"Provided I would introduce a proper love-plot, and make it into three volumes, post octavo, twenty-three lines in a page, neither more nor less. One honest fellow at last was found, who seemed to me a very respectable and indeed enterprising person. And after going through a list of calculations, which showed that

no possible profit could arise, he generously offered to give me half of those no-profits, provided I would guarantee half the very visible expenses. I was just meditating the prudence of accepting this proposal, when your uncle was seized with a sublime idea, which has whisked up my book in a whirlwind of expectation."

"And that idea?" said I, despondingly.

"That idea," quoth Uncle Jack, recovering himself, "is simply and shortly this. From time immemorial, authors have been the prey of the publishers. Sir, authors have lived in garrets, nay, have been choked in the street by an unexpected crumb of bread, like the man who wrote the play, poor fellow!"

"Otway," said my father. "The story is not true—no matter."

"Milton, sir, as everybody knows, sold 'Paradise Lost' for ten pounds—ten pounds, sir! In short, instances of a like nature are too numerous to quote. But the booksellers, sir—they are leviathans—they roll in seas of gold. They subsist upon authors as vampires upon little children. But at last endurance has reached its limit—the fiat has gone forth—the tocsin of liberty has resounded—authors have burst their fetters. And we have just inaugurated the institution of 'The Grand anti-Publisher Confederate Authors' Society,' by which, Pisistratus—by which, mark you, every author is to be his own publisher—that is, every author who joins the Society. No more submission of immortal works to mercenary calculators,

to sordid tastes—no more hard bargains and broken hearts!—no more crumbs of bread choking great tragic poets in the streets—no more Paradises Lost sold at £10 apiece! The author brings his book to a select committee appointed for the purpose; men of delicacy, education, and refinement—authors themselves; they read it, the Society publish; and after a modest deduction, which goes toward the funds of the Society, the Treasurer hands over the profits to the author."

"So that, in fact, Uncle, every author who can't find a publisher anywhere else, will of course come to the Society. The fraternity will be numerous."

"It will indeed."

"And the speculation—ruinous."

"Ruinous, why?"

"Because, in all mercantile negotiations, it is ruinous to invest capital in supplies which fail of demand. You undertake to publish books that booksellers will not publish—why? because booksellers can't sell them! It is just probable that you'll not sell them any better than the booksellers. Ergo, the more your business, the larger your deficit; and the more numerous your society, the more disastrous your condition. Q.E.D."

"Pooh! The select committee will decide what books are to be published."

"Then, where the deuce is the advantage to the authors! I would as lief submit my work to a publisher as I would to a select committee of authors. At all events, the publisher is not my rival; and I suspect

he is the best judge, after all, of a book—as an accoucheur ought to be of a baby."

"Upon my word, nephew, you pay a bad compliment to your father's Great Work, which the booksellers will have nothing to do with."

That was artfully said, and I was posed: when Mr Caxton observed, with an apologetic smile,

"The fact is, my dear Pisistratus, that I want my book published without diminishing the little fortune I keep for you some day. Uncle Jack starts a society so to publish it.—Health and long life to Uncle Jack's society. One can't look a gift horse in the mouth."

Here my mother entered, rosy from a shopping expedition with Mrs Primmins; and in her joy at hearing that I could stay dinner, all else was forgotten. By a wonder, which I did not regret, Uncle Jack really was engaged to dine out. He had other irons in the fire besides the "Literary Times" and the "Confederate Authors' Society;" he was deep in a scheme for making house-tops of felt (which, under other hands, has, I believe, since succeeded); and he had found a rich man (I suppose a hatter) who seemed well inclined to the project, and had actually asked him to dine and expound his views.

CHAPTER III.

HERE we three are seated round the open window—after dinner—familiar as in the old happy time—and my mother is talking low, that she may not disturb my father, who seems in thought.——

Cr-cr-crrr-cr-cr! I feel it—I have it.—Where! What! Where! Knock it down—brush it off! For Heaven's sake, see to it!—Crrrr-crrrrr—there—here—in my hair—in my sleeve—in my ear.—Cr-cr.

I say solemnly, and on the word of a Christian, that, as I sat down to begin this chapter, being somewhat in a brown study, the pen insensibly slipt from my hand, and, leaning back in my chair, I fell to gazing into the fire. It is the end of June, and a remarkably cold evening—even for that time of year. And while I was so gazing I felt something crawling just by the nape of the neck, ma'am. Instinctively and mechanically, and still musing, I put my hand there, and drew forth—What? That *what* it is which perplexes me. It was a thing—a dark thing—a much bigger thing than I had expected. And the sight took me so by surprise, that I gave my hand a violent shake, and the thing went—where I know not. The what

and the where are the knotty points in the whole question! No sooner had it gone, than I was seized with repentance not to have examined it more closely —not to have ascertained what the creature was. It might have been an earwig—a very large motherly earwig—an earwig far gone in that way in which earwigs wish to be who love their lords. I have a profound horror of earwigs—I firmly believe that they do get into the ear. That is a subject on which it is useless to argue with me upon philosophical grounds. I have a vivid recollection of a story told me by Mrs Primmins —How a lady for many years suffered under the most excruciating headaches; how, as the tombstones say, "physicians were in vain;" how she died; and how her head was opened, and how such a nest of earwigs —ma'am—such a nest!—Earwigs are the prolifickest things, and so fond of their offspring! They sit on their eggs like hens—and the young, as soon as they are born, creep under them for protection—quite touchingly! Imagine such an establishment domesticated at one's tympanum!

But the creature was certainly larger than an earwig. It might have been one of that genus in the family of *Forficulidæ*, called *Labidoura*—monsters whose antennæ have thirty joints! There is a species of this creature in England, but, to the great grief of naturalists, and to the great honour of Providence, very rarely found, infinitely larger than the common earwig, or *Forficulida auriculana*. Could it have been an early hornet? It had certainly a black head and great feelers.

I have a greater horror of hornets, if possible, than I have of earwigs. Two hornets will kill a man, and three a carriage-horse sixteen hands high. However, the creature was gone.—Yes, but where? Where had I so rashly thrown it? It might have got into a fold of my dressing-gown or into my slippers—or, in short, anywhere in the various recesses for earwigs and hornets which a gentleman's habiliments afford. I satisfy myself at last, as far as I can, seeing that I am not alone in the room—that it is not upon me. I look upon the carpet—the rug—the chair—under the fender. It is *non inventus*. I barbarously hope it is frizzing behind that great black coal in the grate. I pluck up courage—I prudently remove to the other end of the room. I take up my pen—I begin my chapter—very nicely, too, I think upon the whole. I am just getting into my subject, when—cr-cr-cr-cr-cr—crawl—crawl—crawl—creep—creep—creep. Exactly, my dear ma'am, in the same place it was before! Oh, by the Powers! I forgot all my scientific regrets at not having scrutinised its genus before, whether *Forficulida* or *Labidoura*. I made a desperate lunge with both hands—something between thrust and cut, ma'am. The beast is gone. Yes, but again where? I say that that *where* is a very horrible question. Having come twice, in spite of all my precautions—and exactly on the same spot, too—it shows a confirmed disposition to habituate itself to its quarters—to effect a parochial settlement upon me; there is something awful and preternatural in it. I assure you that there is not a part of me that has not

gone cr-cr-cr !—that has not crept—crawled and forficulated ever since ; and I put it to you what sort of a chapter I can make after such a——My good little girl, will you just take the candle, and look carefully under the table ?—that's a dear ! Yes, my love, very black indeed, with two horns, and inclined to be corpulent. Gentlemen and ladies who have cultivated an acquaintance with the Phœnician language, are aware that Belzebub, examined etymologically and entomologically, is nothing more nor less than Baalzebub—" the Jupiter-fly "—an emblem of the Destroying Attribute, which attribute, indeed, is found in all the insect tribes more or less. Wherefore, as Mr Payne Knight, in his *Inquiry into Symbolical Languages*, hath observed, the Egyptian priests shaved their whole bodies, even to their eyebrows, lest unaware they should harbour any of the minor Zebubs of the great Baal. If I were the least bit more persuaded that that black cr-cr were about me still, and that the sacrifice of my eyebrows would deprive him of shelter, by the souls of the Ptolemies ! I would, —and I will, too. Ring the bell, my little dear ! John, my—my cigar-box ! There is not a cr in the world that can abide the fumes of the Havannah ! Pshaw ! sir, I am not the only man who lets his first thoughts upon cold steel end, like this chapter, in—Pff—pff—pff— !

CHAPTER IV.

Everything in this world is of use, even a black thing crawling over the nape of one's neck! Grim unknown! I shall make of thee—a simile!

I think, ma'am, you will allow that if an incident such as I have described had befallen yourself, and you had a proper and lady-like horror of earwigs (however motherly and fond of their offspring), and also of early hornets,—and indeed of all unknown things of the insect tribe with black heads and two great horns, or feelers, or forceps, just by your ear—I think, ma'am, you will allow that you would find it difficult to settle back to your former placidity of mood and innocent stitch-work. You would feel a something that grated on your nerves—and cr'd-cr'd "all over you like," as the children say. And the worst is, that you would be ashamed to say it. You would feel obliged to look pleased and join in the conversation, and not fidget too much, nor always be shaking your flounces, and looking into a dark corner of your apron. Thus it is with many other things in life besides black insects. One has a secret care—an abstraction—a something between the memory and the feeling, of a dark crawling cr, which

one has never dared to analyse. So I sat by my mother, trying to smile and talk as in the old time,—but longing to move about and look around, and escape to my own solitude, and take the clothes off my mind, and see what it was that had so troubled and terrified me—for trouble and terror were upon me. And my mother, who was always (heaven bless her !) inquisitive enough in all that concerned her darling Anachronism, was especially inquisitive that evening. She made me say where I had been, and what I had done, and how I had spent my time,—and Fanny Trevanion (whom she had seen, by the way, three or four times, and whom she thought the prettiest person in the world)—oh, she must know exactly what I thought of Fanny Trevanion !

And all this while my father seemed in thought; and so, with my arm over my mother's chair, and my hand in hers, I answered my mother's questions—sometimes by a stammer, sometimes by a violent effort at volubility; when at some interrogatory that went tingling right to my heart, I turned uneasily, and there were my father's eyes fixed on mine—fixed as they had been—when, and none knew why, I pined and languished, and my father said " he must go to school." Fixed, with quiet watchful tenderness. Ah no !—his thoughts had not been on the Great Work—he had been deep in the pages of that less worthy one for which he had yet more an author's paternal care. I met those eyes, and yearned to throw myself on his heart—and tell him all. Tell him what ? Ma'am, I no more knew what to tell him, than I know what that black thing

was which has so worried me all this blessed evening!

"Pisistratus," said my father, softly, "I fear you have forgotten the saffron bag."

"No, indeed, sir," said I, smiling.

"He," resumed my father,—"he who wears the saffron bag has more cheerful, settled spirits than you seem to have, my poor boy."

"My dear Austin, his spirits are very good, I think," said my mother, anxiously.

My father shook his head—then he took two or three turns about the room.

"Shall I ring for candles, sir? It is getting dark: you will wish to read?"

"No, Pisistratus, it is you who shall read; and this hour of twilight best suits the book I am about to open to you."

So saying, he drew a chair between me and my mother, and seated himself gravely, looking down a long time in silence—then turning his eyes to each of us alternately.

"My dear wife," said he, at length, almost solemnly, "I am going to speak of myself as I was before I knew you."

Even in the twilight I saw that my mother's countenance changed.

"You have respected my secrets, Katherine, tenderly—honestly. Now the time is come when I can tell them to you and to our son."

CHAPTER V.

MY FATHER'S FIRST LOVE.

"I LOST my mother early; my father (a good man, but who was so indolent that he rarely stirred from his chair, and who often passed whole days without speaking, like an Indian dervish) left Roland and myself to educate ourselves much according to our own tastes. Roland shot, and hunted, and fished,—read all the poetry and books of chivalry to be found in my father's collection, which was rich in such matters, and made a great many copies of the old pedigree;—the only thing in which my father ever evinced much vital interest. Early in life I conceived a passion for graver studies, and by good luck I found a tutor in Mr Tibbets, who, but for his modesty, Kitty, would have rivalled Porson. He was a second Budæus for industry, and by the way, he said exactly the same thing that Budæus did, viz., 'that the only lost day in his life was that in which he was married; for on that day he had only had six hours for reading!' Under such a master I could not fail to be a scholar. I came from the university with such distinction as led me to look sanguinely on my career in the world.

"I returned to my father's quiet rectory to pause and consider what path I should take to fame. The rectory was just at the foot of the hill, on the brow of which were the ruins of the castle Roland has since purchased. And though I did not feel for the ruins the same romantic veneration as my dear brother (for my day-dreams were more coloured by classic than feudal recollections), I yet loved to climb the hill, book in hand, and built my castles in the air amidst the wrecks of that which time had shattered on the earth.

"One day, entering the old weed-grown court, I saw a lady seated on my favourite spot, sketching the ruins. The lady was young—more beautiful than any woman I had yet seen, at least to my eyes. In a word, I was fascinated, and, as the trite phrase goes, 'spell-bound.' I seated myself at a little distance, and contemplated her without desiring to speak. By-and-by, from another part of the ruins, which were then uninhabited, came a tall, imposing, elderly gentleman, with a benignant aspect; and a little dog. The dog ran up to me barking. This drew the attention of both lady and gentleman to me. The gentleman approached, called off the dog, and apologised with much politeness. Surveying me somewhat curiously, he then began to ask questions about the old place and the family it had belonged to, with the name and antecedents of which he was well acquainted. By degrees it came out that I was the descendant of that family, and the younger son of the humble rector who was now its representative. The gentleman then introduced himself to me as the Earl of

Rainsforth, the principal proprietor in the neighbourhood, but who had so rarely visited the county during my childhood and earlier youth, that I had never before seen him. His only son, however, a young man of great promise, had been at the same college with me in my first year at the university. The young lord was a reading man and a scholar; and we had become slightly acquainted when he left for his travels.

"Now, on hearing my name, Lord Rainsforth took my hand cordially, and, leading me to his daughter, said, 'Think, Ellinor, how fortunate!—this is the Mr Caxton whom your brother so often spoke of.'

"In short, my dear Pisistratus, the ice was broken, the acquaintance made, and Lord Rainsforth, saying he was come to atone for his long absence from the county, and to reside at Compton the greater part of the year, pressed me to visit him. I did so. Lord Rainsforth's liking to me increased: I went there often."

My father paused, and seeing my mother had fixed her eyes upon him with a sort of mournful earnestness, and had pressed her hands very tightly together, he bent down and kissed her forehead.

"There is no cause, my child!" said he. It was the only time I ever heard him address my mother so parentally. But then I never heard him before so grave and solemn—not a quotation, too—it was incredible: it was not my father speaking, it was another man. "Yes, I went there often. Lord Rainsforth was a remarkable person. Shyness that was wholly without pride (which is rare), and a love for quiet literary pur-

suits, had prevented his taking that personal part in public life for which he was richly qualified; but his reputation for sense and honour, and his personal popularity, had given him no inconsiderable influence even, I believe, in the formation of cabinets, and he had once been prevailed upon to fill a high diplomatic situation abroad, in which I have no doubt that he was as miserable as a good man can be under any infliction. He was now pleased to retire from the world, and look at it through the loopholes of retreat. Lord Rainsforth had a great respect for talent, and a warm interest in such of the young as seemed to him to possess it. By talent, indeed, his family had risen, and were strikingly characterised. His ancestor, the first peer, had been a distinguished lawyer; his father had been celebrated for scientific attainments; his children, Ellinor and Lord Pendarvis, were highly accomplished. Thus the family identified themselves with the aristocracy of intellect, and seemed unconscious of their claims to the lower aristocracy of rank. You must bear this in mind throughout my story.

"Lady Ellinor shared her father's tastes and habits of thought—(she was not then an heiress). Lord Rainsforth talked to me of my career. It was a time when the French Revolution had made statesmen look round with some anxiety to strengthen the existing order of things, by alliance with all in the rising generation who evinced such ability as might influence their contemporaries.

"University distinction is, or was formerly, among

the popular passports to public life. By degrees, Lord Rainsforth liked me so well as to suggest to me a seat in the House of Commons. A member of Parliament might rise to anything, and Lord Rainsforth had sufficient influence to effect my return. Dazzling prospect this to a young scholar fresh from Thucydides, and with Demosthenes fresh at his tongue's end. My dear boy, I was not then, you see, quite what I am now; in a word, I loved Ellinor Compton, and therefore I was ambitious. You know how ambitious she is still. But I could not mould my ambition to hers. I could not contemplate entering the senate of my country as a dependant on a party or a patron—as a man who must make his fortune there—as a man who, in every vote, must consider how much nearer he advanced himself to emolument. I was not even certain that Lord Rainsforth's views on politics were the same as mine would be. How could the politics of an experienced man of the world be those of an ardent young student? But had they been identical, I felt that I could not so creep into equality with a patron's daughter. No! I was ready to abandon my own more scholastic predilections—to strain every energy at the bar—to carve or force my own way to fortune—and if I arrived at independence, then—what then? why, the right to speak of love, and aim at power. This was not the view of Ellinor Compton. The law seemed to her a tedious, needless drudgery: there was nothing in it to captivate her imagination. She listened to me with that charm which she yet retains, and by which she seems to

identify herself with those who speak to her. She would turn to me with a pleading look when her father dilated on the brilliant prospects of a parliamentary success; for he (not having gained it, yet having lived with those who had) overvalued it, and seemed ever to wish to enjoy it through some other. But when I, in turn, spoke of independence, of the bar, Ellinor's face grew overcast. The world—the world was with her, and the ambition of the world, which is always for power or effect! A part of the house lay exposed to the east wind. 'Plant half-way down the hill,' said I, one day. 'Plant!' cried Lady Ellinor—'it will be twenty years before the trees grow up. No, my dear father, build a wall, and cover it with creepers!' That was an illustration of her whole character. She could not wait till trees had time to grow; a dead wall would be so much more quickly thrown up, and parasite creepers would give it a prettier effect. Nevertheless, she was a grand and noble creature. And I—in love! Not so discouraged as you may suppose; for Lord Rainsforth often hinted encouragement, which even I could scarcely misconstrue. Not caring for rank, and not wishing for fortune beyond competence for his daughter, he saw in me all he required—a gentleman of ancient birth, and one in whom his own active mind could prosecute that kind of mental ambition which overflowed in him, and yet had never had its vent. And Ellinor!—Heaven forbid I should say she loved me,—but something made me think she could

do so. Under these notions, suppressing all my hopes, I made a bold effort to master the influences round me, and to adopt that career I thought worthiest of us all. I went to London to read for the bar."

"The bar! is it possible?" cried I. My father smiled sadly.

"Everything seemed possible to me then. I read some months. I began to see my way even in that short time; began to comprehend what would be the difficulties before me, and to feel there was that within me which could master them. I took a holiday and returned to Cumberland. I found Roland there on my return. Always of a roving, adventurous temper, though he had not then entered the army, he had, for more than two years, been wandering over Great Britain and Ireland on foot. It was a young knight-errant whom I embraced, and who overwhelmed me with reproaches that I should be reading for the law. There had never been a lawyer in the family! It was about that time, I think, that I petrified him with the discovery of the printer! I knew not exactly wherefore, whether from jealousy, fear, foreboding—but it certainly *was* a pain that seized me—when I learned from Roland that he had become intimate at Compton Hall. Roland and Lord Rainsforth had met at the house of a neighbouring gentleman, and Lord Rainsforth had welcomed his acquaintance, at first, perhaps, for my sake, afterwards for his own.

"I could not for the life of me," continued my

father, "ask Roland if he admired Ellinor; but when I found that he did not put that question to me, I trembled!

"We went to Compton together, speaking little by the way. We stayed there some days."

My father here thrust his hand into his waistcoat—all men have their little ways, which denote much; and when my father thrust his hand into his waistcoat, it was always a sign of some mental effort—he was going to prove, or to argue, to moralise, or to preach. Therefore, though I was listening before with all my ears, I believe I had, speaking magnetically and mesmerically, an extra pair of ears, a new sense supplied to me, when my father put his hand into his waistcoat.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEREIN MY FATHER CONTINUES HIS STORY.

"THERE is not a mystical creation, type, symbol, or poetical invention for meanings abstruse, recondite, and incomprehensible, which is not represented by the female gender," said my father, having his hand quite buried in his waistcoat. "For instance, the Sphinx and Isis, whose veil no man had ever lifted, were both ladies, Kitty! And so was Persephone, who must be always either in heaven or hell—and Hecate, who was one thing by night and another by day. The Sibyls were females; and so were the Gorgons, the Harpies, the Furies, the Fates, and the Teutonic Valkyrs, Nornies, and Hela herself: in short, all representations of ideas, obscure, inscrutable, and portentous, are nouns feminine."

Heaven bless my father! Augustine Caxton was himself again! I began to fear that the story had slipped away from him, lost in that labyrinth of learning. But, luckily, as he paused for breath, his look fell on those limpid blue eyes of my mother's, and that

honest open brow of hers, which had certainly nothing in common with Sphinges, Fates, Furies, or Valkyrs; and whether his heart smote him, or his reason made him own that he had fallen into a very disingenuous and unsound train of assertion, I know not, but his front relaxed, and with a smile he resumed—"Ellinor was the last person in the world to deceive any one willingly. Did she deceive me and Roland, that we both, though not conceited men, fancied that, if we had dared to speak openly of love, we had not so dared in vain? or do you think, Kitty, that a woman really can love (not much, perhaps, but somewhat) two or three, or half-a-dozen at a time?"

"Impossible!" cried my mother. "And as for this Lady Ellinor, I am shocked at her—I don't know what to call it!"

"Nor I either, my dear," said my father, slowly taking his hand from his waistcoat, as if the effort were too much for him, and the problem were insoluble. "But this, begging your pardon, I do think, that before a young woman does really, truly, and cordially centre her affections on one object, she suffers fancy, imagination, the desire of power, curiosity, or heaven knows what, to simulate, even to her own mind, pale reflections of the luminary not yet risen—parhelia that precede the sun. Don't judge of Roland as you see him now, Pisistratus—grim, and grey, and formal; imagine a nature soaring high amongst daring thoughts, or exuberant with the nameless poetry of youthful life—with a frame matchless for bounding elasticity—an

eye bright with haughty fire—a heart from which noble sentiments sprang like sparks from an anvil. Lady Ellinor had an ardent, inquisitive imagination. This bold fiery nature must have moved her interest. On the other hand, she had an instructed, full, and eager mind. Am I vain if I say, now after the lapse of so many years, that in my mind her intellect felt companionship? When a woman loves, and marries, and settles, why then she becomes—a one whole, a completed being. But a girl like Ellinor has in her many women. Various herself, all varieties please her. I do believe that, if either of us had spoken the word boldly, Lady Ellinor would have shrunk back to her own heart—examined it, tasked it, and given a frank and generous answer. And he who had spoken first might have had the better chance not to receive a 'No.' But neither of us spoke. And perhaps she was rather curious to know if she had made an impression, than anxious to create it. It was not that she willingly deceived us, but her whole atmosphere was delusion. Mists come before the sunrise. However this be, Roland and I were not long in detecting each other. And hence arose, first coldness, then jealousy, then quarrel."

"Oh, my father, your love must have been indeed powerful, to have made a breach between the hearts of two such brothers!"

"Yes," said my father, "it was amidst the old ruins of the castle, there, where I had first seen Ellinor—that, winding my arm round Roland's neck, as I found

him seated amongst the weeds and stones, his face buried in his hands — it was there that I said, 'Brother, we both love this woman! My nature is the calmer of the two; I shall feel the loss less. Brother, shake hands, and God speed you, for I go.'"

"Austin!" murmured my mother, sinking her head on my father's breast.

"And therewith we quarrelled. For it was Roland who insisted, while the tears rolled down his eyes, and he stamped his foot on the ground, that he was the intruder, the interloper—that he had no hope—that he had been a fool and a madman—and that it was for him to go! Now, while we were disputing, and words began to run high, my father's old servant entered the desolate place, with a note from Lady Ellinor to me, asking for the loan of some book I had praised. Roland saw the handwriting, and while I turned the note over and over irresolutely before I broke the seal, he vanished.

"He did not return to my father's house. We did not know what had become of him. But I, thinking over that impulsive volcanic nature, took quick alarm. And I went in search of him; came on his track at last; and, after many days, found him in a miserable cottage amongst the most dreary of the dreary wastes which form so large a part of Cumberland. He was so altered, I scarcely knew him. To be brief, we came at last to a compromise. We would go back to Compton. This suspense was intolerable. One of us at least

should take courage and learn his fate. But who should speak first? We drew lots, and the lot fell on me.

"And now that I was really to pass the Rubicon, now that I was to impart that secret hope which had animated me so long—been to me a new life—what were my sensations? My dear boy, depend on it that that age is the happiest, when such feelings as I felt then can agitate us no more: they are mistakes in the serene order of that majestic life which heaven meant for thoughtful man. Our souls should be as stars on earth, not as meteors and tortured comets. What could I offer to Ellinor, to her father? What but a future of patient labour? And in either answer, what alternative of misery!—my own existence shattered, or Roland's noble heart!

"Well, we went to Compton. In our former visits we had been almost the only guests. Lord Rainsforth did not much affect the intercourse of country squires, less educated then than now; and in excuse for Ellinor and for us, we were almost the only men of our own age she had seen in that large dull house. But now the London season had broken up, the house was filled; there was no longer that familiar and constant approach to the mistress of the Hall, which had made us like one family. Great ladies, fine people were round her; a look, a smile, a passing word were as much as I had a right to expect. And the talk, too, how different! Before, I could speak on books,—I

was at home there! Roland could pour forth his dreams, his chivalrous love for the past, his bold defiance of the unknown future. And Ellinor, cultivated and fanciful, could sympathise with both. And her father, scholar and gentleman, could sympathise too. But now——"

CHAPTER VII.

WHEREIN MY FATHER BRINGS OUT HIS DENOUEMENT.

"It is no use in the world," said my father, "to know all the languages expounded in grammars and splintered up into lexicons, if we don't learn the language of the world. It is a talk apart, Kitty," cried my father, warming up. "It is an ANAGLYPH—a spoken anaglyph, my dear! If all the hieroglyphs of the Egyptians had been A B C to you, still if you did not know the anaglyph, you would know nothing of the true mysteries of the priests.*

"Neither Roland nor I knew one symbol letter of the anaglyph. Talk, talk—talk on persons we never heard of, things we never cared for. All *we* thought of importance, puerile or pedantic trifles—all we thought so trite and childish, the grand momentous business of life! If you found a little schoolboy, on his half-holiday, fishing for minnows with a crooked pin, and you began to tell him of all the wonders of the deep, the laws of the tides, and the antediluvian relics of iguanodon and ichthyosau-

* The anaglyph was peculiar to the Egyptian priests—the hieroglyph generally known to the well-educated.

rus—nay, if you spoke but of pearl-fisheries and coral banks, or water-kelpies and naïads, would not the little boy cry out peevishly, 'Don't tease me with all that nonsense! let me fish in peace for my minnows!' I think the little boy is right after his own way—it was to fish for minnows that he came out, poor child, not to hear about iguanodons and water-kelpies!

"So the company fished for minnows, and not a word could we say about our pearl-fisheries and coral banks! And as for fishing for minnows ourselves, my dear boy, we should have been less bewildered if you had asked us to fish for a mermaid! Do you see, now, one reason why I have let you go thus early into the world? Well, but amongst these minnow-fishers there was one who fished with an air that made the minnows look larger than salmons.

"Trevanion had been at Cambridge with me. We were even intimate. He was a young man like myself, with his way to make in the world. Poor as I—of a family upon a par with mine—old enough, but decayed. There was, however, this difference between us: he had connections in the great world—I had none. Like me, his chief pecuniary resource was a college fellowship. Now, Trevanion had established a high reputation at the University; but less as a scholar, though a pretty fair one, than as a man to rise in life. Every faculty he had was an energy. He aimed at everything—lost some things—gained others. He was a great speaker in a debating society, a member of some politico-economical club. He was an eternal talker—

brilliant, various, paradoxical, florid—different from what he is now. For, dreading fancy, his career since has been one effort to curb it. But all his mind attached itself to something that we Englishmen call solid: it was a large mind—not, my dear Kitty, like a fine whale sailing through knowledge from the pleasure of sailing—but like a polypus, that puts forth all its feelers for the purpose of catching hold of something. Trevanion had gone at once to London from the University: his reputation and his talk dazzled his connections, not unjustly. They made an effort—they got him into Parliament: he had spoken, he had succeeded. He came to Compton in the flush of his virgin fame. I cannot convey to you who know him now—with his careworn face, and abrupt dry manner—reduced by perpetual gladiatorship to the skin and bone of his former self—what that man was when he first stepped into the arena of life.

"You see, my listeners, that you have to recollect that we middle-aged folks were young then; that is to say, we were as different from what we are now, as the green bough of summer is from the dry wood, out of which we make a ship or a gate-post. Neither man nor wood comes to the uses of life till the green leaves are stripped and the sap gone. And then the uses of life transform us into strange things with other names: the tree is a tree no more—it is a gate or a ship; the youth is a youth no more, but a one-legged soldier; a hollow-eyed statesman; a scholar spectacled and slippered! When Micyllus—(here the hand slides

into the waistcoat again!)—when Micyllus," said my father, "asked the cock that had once been Pythagoras,* if the affair of Troy was really as Homer told it, the cock replied scornfully, 'How could Homer know anything about it?—at that time he was a camel in Bactria.' Pisistratus, according to the doctrine of metempsychosis, you might have been a Bactrian camel, when that which to my life was the siege of Troy saw Roland and Trevanion before the walls.

"Handsome you can see that Trevanion has been; but the beauty of his countenance then was in its perpetual play, its intellectual eagerness; and his conversation was so discursive, so various, so animated, and, above all, so full of the things of the day! If he had been a priest of Serapis for fifty years, he could not have known the anaglyph better. Therefore he filled up every crevice and pore of that hollow society with his broken, inquisitive, petulant light. Therefore he was admired, talked of, listened to; and everybody said, 'Trevanion is a rising man.'

"Yet I did not do him then the justice I have done since; for we students and abstract thinkers are apt too much, in our first youth, to look to the *depth* of a man's mind or knowledge, and not enough to the *surface* it may cover. There may be more water in a flowing stream, only four feet deep, and certainly more force and more health, than in a sullen pool thirty yards to the bottom. I did not do Trevanion justice. I did not see how naturally he realised Lady Ellinor's

* Lucian, *The Dream of Micyllus.*

ideal. I have said that she was like many women in one. Trevanion was a thousand men in one. He had learning to please her mind, eloquence to dazzle her fancy, beauty to please her eye, reputation precisely of the kind to allure her vanity, honour and conscientious purpose to satisfy her judgment; and, above all, he was ambitious; ambitious, not as I—not as Roland was, but ambitious as Ellinor was: ambitious, not to realise some grand ideal in the silent heart, but to grasp the practical positive substances that lay without.

"Ellinor was a child of the great world, and so was he.

"I saw not all this, nor did Roland; and Trevanion seemed to pay no particular court to Ellinor.

"But the time approached when I ought to speak. The house began to thin. Lord Rainsforth had leisure to resume his easy conferences with me; and one day, walking in his garden, he gave me the opportunity; for I need not say, Pisistratus," said my father, looking at me earnestly, "that before any man of honour, if of inferior worldly pretensions, will open his heart seriously to the daughter, it is his duty to speak first to the parent, whose confidence has imposed that trust." I bowed my head and coloured.

"I know not how it was," continued my father, "but Lord Rainsforth turned the conversation on Ellinor. After speaking of his expectations in his son, who was returning home, he said, 'But he will of course enter public life—will, I trust, soon marry, have a separate establishment, and I shall see but little of

him. My Ellinor !—I cannot bear the thought of parting wholly with her. And that, to say the selfish truth, is one reason why I have never wished her to marry a rich man, and so leave me for ever. I could hope that she will give herself to one who may be contented to reside at least great part of the year with me, who may bless me with another son, not steal from me a daughter. I do not mean that he should waste his life in the country ; his occupations would probably lead him to London. I care not where my *house* is—all I want is to keep my *home*. You know' (he added, with a smile that I thought meaning) 'how often I have implied to you that I have no vulgar ambition for Ellinor. Her portion must be very small, for my estate is strictly entailed, and I have lived too much up to my income all my life to hope to save much now. But her tastes do not require expense ; and while I live, at least, there need be no change. She can only prefer a man whose talents, congenial to hers, will win their own career, and ere I die that career may be made.' Lord Rainsforth paused ; and then—how, in what words I know not—but out all burst !—my long-suppressed, timid, anxious, doubtful, fearful love. The strange energy it had given to a nature till then so retiring and calm ! My recent devotion to the law—my confidence that with such a prize I could succeed —it was but a transfer of labour from one study to another. Labour could conquer all things, and custom sweeten them in the conquest. The bar was a less brilliant career than the senate. But the first aim of

the poor man should be independence. In short, Pisistratus, wretched egotist that I was, I forgot Roland in that moment; and I spoke as one who felt his life was in his words.

"Lord Rainsforth looked at me, when I had done, with a countenance full of affection, but it was not cheerful.

"'My dear Caxton,' said he, tremulously, 'I own that I once wished this—wished it from the hour I knew you; but why did you so long—I never suspected that—nor, I am sure, did Ellinor.' He stopped short, and added quickly—'However, go and speak, as you have spoken to me, to Ellinor. Go, it may not yet be too late. And yet—but go.'

"Too late!—what meant those words? Lord Rainsforth had turned hastily down another walk, and left me alone, to ponder over an answer which concealed a riddle. Slowly I took my way towards the house, and sought Lady Ellinor, half hoping, half dreading to find her alone. There was a little room communicating with a conservatory, where she usually sat in the morning. Thither I took my course.

"That room—I see it still!—the walls covered with pictures from her own hand, many were sketches of the haunts we had visited together—the simple ornaments, womanly but not effeminate—the very books on the table, that had been made familiar by dear associations. Yes; there, the *Tasso* in which we had read together the episode of *Clorinda*—there, the *Æschylus* in which I translated to her the *Prometheus*. Pedantries these

might seem to some ; pedantries perhaps they were ; but they were proofs of that congeniality which had knit the man of books to the daughter of the world. That room, it was the home of my heart. Such, in my vanity of spirit, methought would be the air round a home to come. I looked about me, troubled and confused, and, halting timidly, I saw Ellinor before me, leaning her face on her hand, her cheek more flushed than usual, and tears in her eyes. I approached in silence, and as I drew my chair to the table, my eye fell on a glove on the floor. It was a man's glove. Do you know," said my father, "that once, when I was very young, I saw a Dutch picture called The Glove, and the subject was of murder ? There was a weed-grown marshy pool, a desolate dismal landscape, that of itself inspired thoughts of ill deeds and terror. And two men, as if walking by chance, came to this pool ; the finger of one pointed to a blood-stained glove, and the eyes of both were fixed on each other, as if there were no need of words. That glove told its tale ! The picture had long haunted me in my boyhood, but it never gave me so uneasy and fearful a feeling as did that real glove upon the floor. Why ? My dear Pisistratus, the theory of forebodings involves one of those questions on which we may ask 'why' for ever. More chilled than I had been in speaking to her father, I took heart at last, and spoke to Ellinor."

My father stopped short, the moon had risen, and was shining full into the room and on his face. And by that light the face was changed ; young emotions

had brought back youth—my father looked a young man. But what pain was there! If the memory alone could raise what, after all, was but the ghost of suffering, what had been its living reality! Involuntarily I seized his hand; my father pressed it convulsively, and said with a deep breath—"It was too late; Trevanion was Lady Ellinor's accepted, plighted, happy lover. My dear Katherine, I do not envy him now; look up, sweet wife, look up!"

CHAPTER VIII.

"ELLINOR (let me do her justice) was shocked at my silent emotion. No human lip could utter more tender sympathy, more noble self-reproach; but that was no balm to my wound. So I left the house; so I never returned to the law; so all impetus, all motive for exertion, seemed taken from my being; so I went back into books. And so, a moping, despondent, worthless mourner might I have been to the end of my days, but that Heaven, in its mercy, sent thy mother, Pisistratus, across my path; and day and night I bless God and her; for I have been, and am—oh, indeed, I am, a happy man!"

My mother threw herself on my father's breast, sobbing violently, and then turned from the room without a word; my father's eye, swimming in tears, followed her; and then, after pacing the room for some moments in silence, he came up to me, and leaning his arm on my shoulder, whispered, "Can you guess why I have now told you all this, my son?"

"Yes, partly: thank you father," I faltered, and sat down, for I felt faint.

"Some sons," said my father, seating himself beside

me, "would find in their fathers' follies and errors an excuse for their own; not so will you, Pisistratus."

"I see no folly, no error, sir; only nature and sorrow."

"Pause ere you thus think," said my father. "Great was the folly and great the error of indulging imagination that had no basis—of linking the whole usefulness of my life to the will of a human creature like myself. Heaven did not design the passion of love to be this tyrant; nor is it so with the mass and multitude of human life. We dreamers, solitary students like me, or half-poets like poor Roland, make our own disease. How many years, even after I had regained serenity, as your mother gave me a home long not appreciated, have I wasted! The mainspring of my existence was snapped—I took no note of time. And therefore now, you see, late in life, Nemesis wakes. I look back with regret at powers neglected, opportunities gone. Galvanically I brace up energies half-palsied by disuse; and you see me, rather than rest quiet and good for nothing, talked into what, I daresay, are sad follies, by an Uncle Jack! And now I behold Ellinor again; and I say in wonder—'All this—all this—all this agony, all this torpor, for that haggard face, that worldly spirit!' So is it ever in life: mortal things fade; immortal things spring more freshly with every step to the tomb.

"Ah!" continued my father, with a sigh, "it would not have been so, if at your age I had found out the secret of the saffron bag!"

CHAPTER IX.

"And Roland, sir," said I—"how did he take it?"

"With all the indignation of a proud unreasonable man. More indignant, poor fellow, for me than himself. And so did he wound and gall me by what he said of Ellinor, and so did he rage against me because I would not share his rage, that again we quarrelled. We parted, and did not meet for many years. We came into sudden possession of our little fortunes. His he devoted (as you may know) to the purchase of the old ruins, and the commission in the army, which had always been his dream—and so went his way, wrathful. My share gave me an excuse for indolence—it satisfied all my wants; and when my old tutor died, and his young child became my ward, and, somehow or other, from my ward my wife, it allowed me to resign my fellowship, and live amongst my books—still as a book myself. One comfort, somewhat before my marriage, I had conceived; and that, too, Roland has since said was comfort to him. Ellinor became an heiress. Her poor brother died; and all of the estate that did not pass in the male line devolved on her. That fortune made a gulf between us almost as wide as her marriage.

For Ellinor, poor and portionless in spite of her rank, I could have worked, striven, slaved; but Ellinor RICH! it would have crushed me. This was a comfort. But still, still the past—that perpetual aching sense of something that had seemed the essential of life withdrawn from life, evermore, evermore! What was left was not sorrow—it was a void. Had I lived more with men, and less with dreams and books, I should have made my nature large enough to bear the loss of a single passion. But in solitude we shrink up. No plant so much as man needs the sun and the air. I comprehend now why most of our best and wisest men have lived in capitals; and therefore again I say, that one scholar in a family is enough. Confiding in your sound heart and strong honour, I turn you thus betimes on the world. Have I done wrong? Prove that I have not, my child. Do you know what a very good man has said? Listen, and follow my precept, not example.

"'The state of the world is such, and so much depends on action, that everything seems to say aloud to every man, Do something—do it—do it!'" *

I was profoundly touched, and I rose refreshed and hopeful, when suddenly the door opened, and who or what in the world should come in; but certainly he, she, it, or they, shall not come into this chapter! On that point I am resolved. No, my dear young lady, I am extremely flattered;—I feel for your curiosity; but really not a peep—not one! And yet—well then, if

* *Remains of the Rev. Richard Cecil*, p. 349.

you will have it, and look so coaxingly—who or what, I say, should come in abrupt, unexpected—taking away one's breath, not giving one time to say "By your leave, or with your leave," but making one's mouth stand open with surprise, and one's eyes fix in a big round stupid stare, but—

THE END OF THE CHAPTER.

PART EIGHTH.

CHAPTER I.

THERE entered, in the front drawing-room of my father's house in Russell Street—an Elf!!! clad in white,—small, delicate, with curls of jet over her shoulders;—with eyes so large and so lustrous that they shone through the room, as no eyes merely human could possibly shine. The Elf approached, and stood facing us. The sight was so unexpected, and the apparition so strange, that we remained for some moments in startled silence. At length my father, as the bolder and wiser man of the two, and the more fitted to deal with the eerie things of another world, had the audacity to step close up to the little creature, and, bending down to examine its face, said, "What do you want, my pretty child?"

Pretty child! was it only a pretty child after all? Alas, it would be well if all we mistake for fairies at the first glance could resolve themselves only into pretty children!

"Come," answered the child, with a foreign accent, and taking my father by the lappet of his coat, "come, poor papa is so ill! I am frightened! come—and save him."

"Certainly," exclaimed my father, quickly: "where's my hat, Sisty? Certainly, my child, we will go and save papa."

"But who is papa?" asked Pisistratus—a question that would never have occurred to my father. He never asked who or what the sick papas of poor children were, when the children pulled him by the lappet of his coat —"Who is papa?"

The child looked hard at me, and the big tears rolled from those large luminous eyes, but quite silently. At this moment a full-grown figure filled up the threshold, and, emerging from the shadow, presented to us the aspect of a stout well-favoured young woman. She dropped a curtsy, and then said, mincingly,

"Oh, miss, you ought to have waited for me, and not alarmed the gentlefolks by running up-stairs in that way. If you please, sir, I was settling with the cab-man, and he was so imperent: them low fellows always are, when they have only us poor women to deal with, sir—and——"

"But what is the matter?" cried I, for my father had taken the child in his arms, soothingly, and she was now weeping on his breast.

"Why, you see, sir (another curtsy), the gent only arrived last night at our hotel, sir—the Lamb, close by Lunnun Bridge—and he was taken ill—and he's not

quite in his right mind like : so we sent for the doctor, and the doctor looked at the brass plate on the gent's carpet-bag, sir—and he then looked into the *Court Guide*, and he said, 'There is a Mr Caxton in Great Russell Street,—is he any relation?' and this young lady said, 'That's my papa's brother, and we were going there.' And so, sir, as the Boots was out, I got into a cab, and miss would come with me, and——"

"Roland—Roland ill! Quick—quick, quick!" cried my father, and, with the child still in his arms, he ran down the stairs. I followed with his hat, which of course he had forgotten. A cab, by good luck, was passing our very door; but the chambermaid would not let us enter it till she had satisfied herself that it was not the same she had dismissed. This preliminary investigation completed, we entered, and drove to the Lamb.

The chambermaid, who sate opposite, passed the time in ineffectual overtures to relieve my father of the little girl, who still clung nestling to his breast,—in a long epic, much broken into episodes, of the causes which had led to her dismissal of the late cabman, who, to swell his fare, had thought proper to take a "circumbendibus!"—and with occasional tugs at her cap, and smoothings down of her gown, and apologies for being such a figure, especially when her eyes rested on my satin cravat, or drooped on my shining boots.

Arrived at the Lamb, the chambermaid, with conscious dignity, led us up a large staircase, which seemed interminable. As she mounted the region

above the third story, she paused to take breath, and inform us, apologetically, that the house was full, but that, if the "gent" stayed over Friday, he would be moved into No. 54, "with a look-out and a chimbly." My little cousin now slipped from my father's arms, and, running up the stairs, beckoned to us to follow. We did so, and were led to a door, at which the child stopped and listened; then, taking off her shoes, she stole in on tiptoe. We entered after her.

By the light of a single candle we saw my poor uncle's face; it was flushed with fever, and the eyes had that bright vacant stare which it is so terrible to meet. Less terrible is it to find the body wasted, the features sharp with the great life-struggle, than to look on the face from which the mind is gone,—the eyes in which there is no recognition. Such a sight is a startling shock to that unconscious habitual materialism with which we are apt familiarly to regard those we love: for, in thus missing the mind, the heart, the affection that sprang to ours, we are suddenly made aware that it was the something *within* the form, and not the form itself, that was so dear to us. The form itself is still, perhaps, little altered; but that lip which smiles no welcome, that eye which wanders over us as strangers, that ear which distinguishes no more our voices,—the *friend* we sought is not there! Even our own love is chilled back—grows a kind of vague superstitious terror. Yes, it was not the matter, still present to us, which had conciliated all those subtle nameless sentiments which are classed and fused in the word

"*affection*,"—it was the airy, intangible, electric *something*,—the absence of which now appals us.

I stood speechless—my father crept on, and took the hand that returned no pressure :—The child only did not seem to share our emotions, but, clambering on the bed, laid her cheek on the breast, and was still.

"Pisistratus," whispered my father at last, and I stole near, hushing my breath,—"Pisistratus, if your mother were here!"

I nodded: the same thought had struck us both. His deep wisdom, my active youth, both felt their nothingness then and there. In the sick chamber, both turned helplessly to miss the *woman*.

So I stole out, descended the stairs, and stood in the open air in a sort of stunned amaze. Then the tramp of feet, and the roll of wheels, and the great London roar, revived me. That contagion of practical life which lulls the heart and stimulates the brain,—what an intellectual mystery there is in its common atmosphere! In another moment I had singled out, like an inspiration, from a long file of those ministrants of our Trivia, the cab of the lightest shape and with the strongest horse, and was on my way, not to my mother's, but to Dr M—— H——, Manchester Square, whom I knew as the medical adviser to the Trevanions. Fortunately, that kind and able physician was at home, and he promised to be with the sufferer before I myself could join him. I then drove to Russell Street, and broke to my mother, as cautiously as I could, the intelligence with which I was charged.

When we arrived at the Lamb, we found the doctor already writing his prescription and injunctions: the activity of the treatment announced the danger. I flew for the surgeon who had been before called in. Happy those who are strange to that indescribable silent bustle which the sick-room at times presents—that conflict which seems almost hand to hand between life and death—when all the poor, unresisting, unconscious frame is given up to the war against its terrible enemy; the dark blood flowing—flowing; the hand on the pulse, the hushed suspense, every look on the physician's bended brow; then the sinaplasms to the feet and the ice to the head; and now and then, through the lull of the low whispers, the incoherent voice of the sufferer—babbling, perhaps, of green fields and fairyland, while your hearts are breaking! Then, at length, the sleep—in that sleep, perhaps, the crisis—the breathless watch, the slow waking, the first *sane* words—the old smile again, only fainter—your gushing tears, your low "Thank God! thank God!"

Picture all this; it is past: Roland has spoken—his sense has returned—my mother is leaning over him—his child's small hands are clasped round his neck—the surgeon, who has been there six hours, has taken up his hat, and smiles gaily as he nods farewell—and my father is leaning against the wall, his face covered with his hands.

CHAPTER II.

All this had been so sudden that, to use the trite phrase—for no other is so expressive—it was like a dream. I felt an absolute, an imperious want of solitude, of the open air. The swell of gratitude almost stifled me—the room did not seem large enough for my big heart. In early youth, if we find it difficult to control our feelings, so we find it difficult to vent them in the presence of others. On the spring side of twenty, if anything affects us, we rush to lock ourselves up in our room, or get away into the streets or fields; in our earlier years we are still the savages of Nature, and we do as the poor brute does,—the wounded stag leaves the herd, and if there is anything on a dog's faithful heart, he slinks away into a corner.

Accordingly, I stole out of the hotel, and wandered through the streets, which were quite deserted. It was about the first hour of dawn, the most comfortless hour there is, especially in London! But I only felt freshness in the raw air, and soothing in the desolate stillness. The love my uncle inspired was very remarkable in its nature: it was not like that quiet affection with which those advanced in life must usually content

themselves, but connected with the more vivid interest that youth awakens. There was in him still so much of vivacity and fire, in his errors and crotchets so much of the self-delusion of youth, that one could scarce fancy him other than young. Those Quixotic exaggerated notions of honour, that romance of sentiment, which no hardship, care, grief, disappointment, could wear away (singular in a period when, at two-and-twenty, young men declare themselves *blasés!*) seemed to leave him all the charm of boyhood. A season in London had made me more a man of the world, older in heart than he was. Then, the sorrow that gnawed him with such silent sternness. No, Captain Roland was one of those men who seize hold of your thoughts, who mix themselves up with your lives. The idea that Roland should die—die with the load at his heart unlightened, was one that seemed to take a spring out of the wheels of nature, an object out of the aims of life—of my life at least. For I had made it one of the ends of my existence to bring back the son to the father, and restore the smile that must have been gay once to the downward curve of that iron lip. But Roland was now out of danger,—and yet, like one who has escaped shipwreck, I trembled to look back on the danger past; the voice of the devouring deep still boomed in my ears. While rapt in my reveries, I stopped mechanically to hear a clock strike—four; and, looking round, I perceived that I had wandered from the heart of the City, and was in one of the streets that lead out of the Strand. Immediately before me, on the doorsteps of a large shop,

whose closed shutters wore as obstinate a stillness as if they had guarded the secrets of seventeen centuries in a street in Pompeii,—reclined a form fast asleep; the arm propped on the hard stone supporting the head, and the limbs uneasily strewn over the stairs. The dress of the slumberer was travel-stained, tattered, yet with the remains of a certain pretence: an air of faded, shabby, penniless gentility made poverty more painful, because it seemed to indicate unfitness to grapple with it. The face of this person was hollow and pale, but its expression, even in sleep, was fierce and hard. I drew near and nearer; I recognised the countenance, the regular features, the raven hair, even a peculiar gracefulness of posture: the young man whom I had met at the inn by the way-side, and who had left me alone with the Savoyard and his mice in the churchyard, was before me. I remained behind the shadow of one of the columns of the porch, leaning against the area rails, and irresolute whether or not so slight an acquaintance justified me in waking the sleeper, when a policeman, suddenly emerging from an angle in the street, terminated my deliberations with the decision of his practical profession; for he laid hold of the young man's arm and shook it roughly,—"You must not lie here; get up and go home!" The sleeper woke with a quick start, rubbed his eyes, looked round, and fixed them upon the policeman so haughtily, that that discriminating functionary probably thought that it was not from sheer necessity that so improper a couch had been selected, and, with an air of greater respect, he said,

"You have been drinking, young man,—can you find your way home?"

"Yes," said the youth, resettling himself, "you see I have found it!"

"By the Lord Harry!" muttered the policeman, "if he ben't going to sleep again! Come, come, walk on, or I must walk you off."

My old acquaintance turned round. "Policeman," said he, with a strange sort of smile, "what do you think this lodging is worth?—I don't say for the night, for you see that is over, but for the next two hours? The lodging is primitive, but it suits me; I should think a shilling would be a fair price for it—eh?"

"You love your joke, sir," said the policeman, with a brow much relaxed, and opening his hand mechanically.

"Say a shilling, then—it is a bargain! I hire it of you upon credit. Good-night, and call me at six o'clock."

With that the young man settled himself so resolutely, and the policeman's face exhibited such bewilderment, that I burst out laughing, and came from my hiding-place.

The policeman looked at me. "Do you know this —this——"

"This gentleman?" said I, gravely. "Yes, you may leave him to me; and I slipped the price of the lodging into the policeman's hand. He looked at the shilling —he looked at me—he looked up the street and down the street—shook his head, and walked off. I then approached the youth, touched him, and said—"Can you

remember me, sir; and what have you done with Mr Peacock?"

STRANGER (after a pause).—"I remember you; your name is Caxton."

PISISTRATUS.—"And yours?"

STRANGER.—"Poor devil, if you ask my pockets—pockets, which are the symbols of man; Dare-devil, if you ask my heart. (Surveying me from head to foot.) —The world seems to have smiled on you, Mr Caxton! Are you not ashamed to speak to a wretch lying on the stones?—but, to be sure, no one sees you."

PISISTRATUS (sententiously).—"Had I lived in the last century, I might have found Samuel Johnson lying on the stones."

STRANGER (rising).—"You have spoilt my sleep; you had a right, since you paid for the lodging. Let me walk with you a few paces; you need not fear—I do not pick pockets—yet!"

PISISTRATUS.—"You say the world has smiled on me; I fear it has frowned on you. I don't say 'courage,' for you seem to have enough of that; but I say '*patience*,' which is the rarer quality of the two."

STRANGER.—"Hem!" (again looking at me keenly). "Why is it that you stop to speak to me—one of whom you know nothing, or worse than nothing?"

PISISTRATUS.—"Because I have often thought of you; because you interest me; because—pardon me—I would help you if I can—that is, if you want help."

STRANGER.—"Want! I am one want! I want sleep—I want food:—I want the patience you recom-

mend—patience to starve and rot. I have travelled from Paris to Boulogne on foot, with twelve sous in my pocket. Out of those twelve sous in my pocket I saved four; with the four I went to a billiard-room at Boulogne; I won just enough to pay my passage and buy three rolls. You see I only require capital in order to make a fortune. If with four sous I can win ten francs in a night, what could I win with a capital of four sovereigns, and in the course of a year?—that is an application of the Rule of Three which my head aches too much to calculate just at present. Well, those three rolls have lasted me three days; the last crumb went for supper last night. Therefore, take care how you offer me money (for that is what men mean by help). You see I have no option but to take it. But I warn you, don't expect gratitude!—I have none in me!"

PISISTRATUS.—"You are not so bad as you paint yourself. I would do something more for you if I can, than lend you the little I have to offer. Will you be frank with me?"

STRANGER.—"That depends—I have been frank enough hitherto, I think."

PISISTRATUS.—"True; so I proceed without scruple. Don't tell me your name or your condition, if you object to such confidence; but tell me if you have relations to whom you can apply? You shake your head: well, then, are you willing to work for yourself? or is it only at the billiard-table (pardon me) that you can try to make four sous produce ten francs?"

STRANGER (musing).—"I understand you. I have never worked yet—I abhor work. But I have no objection to try if it is in me."

PISISTRATUS.—"It is in you: a man who can walk from Paris to Boulogne with twelve sous in his pocket, and save four for a purpose—who can stake those four on the cool confidence in his own skill, even at billiards—who can subsist for three days on three rolls—and who, on the fourth day, can wake from the stones of a capital with an eye and a spirit as proud as yours, has in him all the requisites to subdue fortune."

STRANGER.—"Do you work?—you?"

PISISTRATUS.—"Yes—and hard."

STRANGER.—"I am ready to work, then."

PISISTRATUS.—"Good. Now, what can you do?"

STRANGER (with his odd smile).—"Many things useful. I can split a bullet on a penknife; I know the secret tierce of Coulon, the fencing-master; I can speak two languages (besides English) like a native, even to their slang: I know every game in the cards: I can act comedy, tragedy, farce: I can drink down Bacchus himself: I can make any woman I please in love with me—that is, any woman good-for-nothing. Can I earn a handsome livelihood out of all this—wear kid gloves, and set up a cabriolet? You see my wishes are modest!"

PISISTRATUS.—"You speak two languages, you say, like a native—French, I suppose, is one of them?"

STRANGER.—"Yes."

PISISTRATUS.—"Will you teach it?"

STRANGER (haughtily).—"No. *Je suis gentilhomme*, which means more or less than a gentleman. *Gentilhomme* means well born, because free born—teachers are slaves!"

PISISTRATUS (unconsciously imitating Mr Trevanion).—"Stuff!"

STRANGER (looks angry, and then laughs).—"Very true; stilts don't suit shoes like these! But I cannot teach: heaven help those *I* should teach!—anything else?"

PISISTRATUS.—"Anything else!—you leave me a wide margin. You know French thoroughly—to write as well as speak?—that is much. Give me some address where I can find you—or will you call on me?"

STRANGER.—"No! Any evening at dusk I will meet you. I have no address to give; and I cannot show these rags at another man's door."

PISISTRATUS.—"At nine in the evening, then, and here in the Strand, on Thursday next. I may then have found something that will suit you. Meanwhile—" (slides his purse into the Stranger's hand. N.B.—Purse not very full).

Stranger, with the air of one conferring a favour, pockets the purse; and there is something so striking in the very absence of all emotion at so accidental a rescue from starvation, that Pisistratus exclaims—

"I don't know why I should have taken this fancy to you, Mr Daredevil, if that be the name that pleases

you best. The wood you are made of seems cross-grained, and full of knots ; and yet, in the hands of a skilful carver, I think it would be worth much."

STRANGER (startled).—"Do you? do you? None, I believe, ever thought that before. But the same wood, I suppose, that makes the gibbet, could make the mast of a man-of-war. I tell you, however, why you have taken this fancy to me—the strong sympathise with the strong. You, too, could subdue fortune!"

PISISTRATUS.—"Stop ; if so—if there is congeniality between us ; then liking should be reciprocal. Come, say that ; for half my chance of helping you is in my power to touch your heart."

STRANGER (evidently softened).—"If I were as great a rogue as I ought to be, my answer would be easy enough. As it is, I delay it. Adieu.—On Thursday."

Stranger vanishes in the labyrinth of alleys round Leicester Square.

CHAPTER III.

On my return to The Lamb, I found that my uncle was in a soft sleep; and after a morning visit from the surgeon, and his assurance that the fever was fast subsiding, and all cause for alarm was gone, I thought it necessary to go back to Trevanion's house, and explain the reason for my night's absence. But the family had not returned from the country. Trevanion himself came up for a few hours in the afternoon, and seemed to feel much for my poor uncle's illness. Though, as usual, very busy, he accompanied me to The Lamb, to see my father, and cheer him up. Roland still continued to mend, as the surgeon phrased it; and as we went back to St James's Square, Trevanion had the consideration to release me from my oar in his galley for the next few days. My mind, relieved from my anxiety for Roland, now turned to my new friend. It had not been without an object that I had questioned the young man as to his knowledge of French. Trevanion had a large correspondence in foreign countries which was carried on in that language, and here I could be but of little help to him. He himself, though he spoke and wrote French with fluency and grammatical correctness, wanted that inti-

mate knowledge of the most delicate and diplomatic of all languages to satisfy his classical purism. For Trevanion was a terrible *word-weigher*. His taste was the plague of my life and his own. His prepared speeches (or rather perorations) were the most finished pieces of cold diction that could be conceived under the marble portico of the Stoics,—so filed and turned, trimmed and tamed, that they never admitted a sentence that could warm the heart, or one that could offend the ear. He had so great a horror of a vulgarism that, like Canning, he would have made a periphrasis of a couple of lines to avoid using the word "cat." It was only in extempore speaking that a ray of his real genius could indiscreetly betray itself. One may judge what labour such a super-refinement of taste would inflict upon a man writing in a language not his own to some distinguished statesman, or some literary institution,—knowing that language just well enough to recognise all the native elegancies he failed to attain. Trevanion, at that very moment, was employed upon a statistical document intended as a communication to a Society at Copenhagen, of which he was an honorary member. It had been for three weeks the torment of the whole house, especially of poor Fanny (whose French was the best at our joint disposal). But Trevanion had found her phraseology too mincing, too effeminate, too much that of the *boudoir*. Here, then, was an opportunity to introduce my new friend, and test the capacities that I fancied he possessed. I therefore, though with some hesitation, led the subject

to "Remarks on the Mineral Treasures of Great Britain and Ireland" (such was the title of the work intended to enlighten the *savans* of Denmark); and, by certain ingenious circumlocutions, known to all able applicants, I introduced my acquaintance with a young gentleman who possessed the most familiar and intimate knowledge of French, and who might be of use in revising the manuscript. I knew enough of Trevanion to feel that I could not reveal the circumstances under which I had formed that acquaintance, for he was much too practical a man not to have been frightened out of his wits at the idea of submitting so classical a performance to so disreputable a scapegrace. As it was, however, Trevanion, whose mind at that moment was full of a thousand other things, caught at my suggestion, with very little cross-questioning on the subject, and before he left London, consigned the manuscript to my charge.

"My friend is poor," said I, timidly.

"Oh! as to that," cried Trevanion hastily, "if it be a matter of charity, I put my purse in your hands; but don't put my manuscript in his! If it be a matter of business, it is another affair; and I must judge of his work before I can say how much it is worth—perhaps nothing!"

So ungracious was this excellent man in his very virtues!

"Náy," said I, "it is a matter of business, and so we will consider it."

"In that case," said Trevanion, concluding the mat-

ter, and buttoning his pockets, "if I dislike his work, *nothing;* if I like it, twenty guineas. Where are the evening papers?" and in another moment the Member of Parliament had forgotten the statist, and was pishing and tutting over the *Globe* or the *Sun*.

On Thursday, my uncle was well enough to be moved into our house; and on the same evening, I went forth to keep my appointment with the stranger. The clock struck nine as we met. The palm of punctuality might be divided between us. He had profited by the interval, since our last meeting, to repair the more obvious deficiencies of his wardrobe; and though there was something still wild, dissolute, outlandish, about his whole appearance, yet in the elastic energy of his step, and the resolute assurance of his bearing, there was that which Nature gives to her own aristocracy,—for, as far as my observation goes, what has been called the "grand air" (and which is wholly distinct from the polish of manner, or the urbane grace of high breeding) is always accompanied, and perhaps produced, by two qualities—courage, and the desire of command. It is more common to a half-savage nature than to one wholly civilised. The Arab has it, so has the American Indian: and I suspect that it was more frequent among the knights and barons of the Middle Ages than it is among the polished gentlemen of the modern drawing-room.

We shook hands, and walked on a few moments in silence; at length thus commenced the STRANGER,—

"You have found it more difficult, I fear, than you

imagined, to make the empty sack stand upright. Considering that at least one-third of those born to work cannot find it, why should I?"

PISISTRATUS.—"I am hard-hearted enough to believe that work never fails to those who seek it in good earnest. It was said of some man, famous for keeping his word, that, 'if he had promised you an acorn, and all the oaks in England failed to produce one, he would have sent to Norway for an acorn.' If I wanted work, and there was none to be had in the Old World, I would find my way to the New. But, to the point: I *have* found something for you, which I do not think your taste will oppose, and which may open to you the means of an honourable independence. But I cannot well explain it in the streets: where shall we go?"

STRANGER (after some hesitation).—"I have a lodging near here, which I need not blush to take you to—I mean, that it is not among rogues and cast-aways."

PISISTRATUS (much pleased, and taking the stranger's arm).—"Come, then."

Pisistratus and the stranger pass over Waterloo Bridge, and pause before a small house of respectable appearance. Stranger admits them both with a latch-key—leads the way to the third story—strikes a light, and does the honours to a small chamber, clean and orderly. Pisistratus explains the task to be done, and opens the manuscript. The stranger draws his chair deliberately towards the light, and runs his eye rapidly over the pages. Pisistratus trembles to see him pause before a long array of figures and calculations. Certainly

it does not look inviting; but, pshaw! it is scarcely a part of the task which limits itself to the mere correction of words.

STRANGER (briefly).—"There must be a mistake here —stay!—I see—" (He turns back a few pages, and corrects with rapid precision an error in a somewhat complicated and abstruse calculation).

PISISTRATUS (surprised).—"You seem a notable arithmetician."

STRANGER.—"Did I not tell you that I was skilful in all games of mingled skill and chance? It requires an arithmetical head for that: a first-rate card-player is a financier spoilt. I am certain that you never could find a man fortunate on the turf, or at the gaming-table, who had not an excellent head for figures. Well, this French is good enough apparently; there are but a few idioms, here and there, that, strictly speaking, are more English than French. But the whole is a work scarce worth paying for!"

PISISTRATUS.—"The work of the head fetches a price not proportioned to the quantity, but the quality. When shall I call for this?"

STRANGER.—"To-morrow." (And he puts the manuscript away in a drawer.)

We then conversed on various matters for nearly an hour; and my impression of this young man's natural ability was confirmed and heightened. But it was an ability as wrong and perverse in its directions or instincts as a French novelist's. He seemed to have, to a high degree, the harder portion of the reasoning

faculty, but to be almost wholly without that arch beautifier of character, that sweet purifier of mere intellect—*the imagination*. For, though we are too much taught to be on our guard against imagination, I hold it, with Captain Roland, to be the divinest kind of reason we possess, and the one that leads us the least astray. In youth, indeed, it occasions errors, but they are not of a sordid or debasing nature. Newton says that one final effect of the comets is to recruit the seas and the planets by a condensation of the vapours and exhalations therein; and so even the erratic flashes of an imagination really healthful and vigorous deepen our knowledge and brighten our lights; they recruit our seas and our stars. Of such flashes my new friend was as innocent as the sternest matter-of-fact person could desire. Fancies he had in profusion, and very bad ones: but of imagination not a *scintilla!* His mind was one of those which live in a prison of logic, and cannot, or will not, see beyond the bars: such a nature is at once positive and sceptical. This boy had thought proper to decide at once on the numberless complexities of the social world from his own harsh experience. With him the whole system was a war and a cheat. If the universe were entirely composed of knaves, he would be sure to have made his way. Now this bias of mind, alike shrewd and unamiable, might be safe enough if accompanied by a lethargic temper; but it threatened to become terrible and dangerous in one who, in default of imagination, possessed abundance of passion: and this was the case with the young outcast. Passion, in

him, comprehended many of the worst emotions which militate against human happiness. You could not contradict him, but you raised quick choler; you could not speak of wealth, but the cheek paled with gnawing envy. The astonishing natural advantages of this poor boy—his beauty, his readiness, the daring spirit that breathed around him like a fiery atmosphere—had raised his constitutional self-confidence into an arrogance that turned his very claims to admiration into prejudices against him. Irascible, envious, arrogant—bad enough, but not the worst, for these salient angles were all varnished over with a cold repellant cynicism—his passions vented themselves in sneers. There seemed in him no moral susceptibility; and, what was more remarkable in a proud nature, little or nothing of the true point of honour. He had, to a morbid excess, that desire to rise, which is vulgarly called ambition, but no apparent wish for fame, or esteem, or the love of his species; only the hard wish to succeed, not shine, not serve,—succeed, that he might have the right to despise a world which galled his self-conceit, and enjoy the pleasures which the redundant nervous life in him seemed to crave. Such were the more patent attributes of a character that, ominous as it was, yet interested me, and yet appeared to me to be redeemable,—nay, to have in it the rude elements of a certain greatness. Ought we not to make something great out of a youth under twenty, who has, in the highest degree, quickness to conceive and courage to execute? On the other hand, all faculties that can make greatness, contain those that

can attain goodness. In the savage Scandinavian, or the ruthless Frank, lay the germs of a Sydney or a Bayard. What would the best of us be, if we were suddenly placed at war with the whole world? And this fierce spirit *was* at war with the whole world—a war self-sought, perhaps, but it was war not the less. You must surround the savage with peace, if you want the virtues of peace.

I cannot say that it was in a single interview and conference that I came to these convictions; but I am rather summing up the impressions which I received as I saw more of this person, whose destiny I presumed to take under my charge.

In going away, I said, "But, at all events, you have a name in your lodgings: whom am I to ask for when I call to-morrow?"

"Oh, you may know my name now," said he, smiling: "it is Vivian—Francis Vivian."

CHAPTER IV.

I REMEMBER one morning, when a boy, loitering by an old wall, to watch the operations of a garden spider, whose web seemed to be in great request. When I first stopped, she was engaged very quietly with a fly of the domestic species, whom she managed with ease and dignity. But just when she was most interested in that absorbing employment, came a couple of May-flies, and then a gnat, and then a blue-bottle,—all at different angles of the web. Never was a poor spider so distracted by her good fortune! She evidently did not know which godsend to take first. The aboriginal victim being released, she slid half-way towards the May-flies; then one of her eight eyes caught sight of the blue-bottle! and she shot off in that direction:—when the hum of the gnat again diverted her; and in the middle of this perplexity, pounce came a young wasp in a violent passion! Then the spider evidently lost her presence of mind; she became clean demented: and after standing, stupid and stock-still, in the middle of her meshes, for a minute or two, she ran off to her hole as fast as she could run, and left her guests to shift for themselves. I confess that I am somewhat in

the dilemma of the attractive and amiable insect I have just described. I got on well enough while I had only my domestic fly to see after. But now that there is something fluttering at every end of my net (and especially since the advent of that passionate young wasp, who is fuming and buzzing in the nearest corner!) I am fairly at a loss which I should first grapple with —and alas! unlike the spider, I have no hole where I can hide myself, and let the web do the weaver's work. But I will imitate the spider as far as I can; and while the rest hum and struggle away their impatient, unnoticed hour, I will retreat into the inner labyrinth of my own life.

The illness of my uncle, and my renewed acquaintance with Vivian, had naturally sufficed to draw my thoughts from the rash and unpropitious love I had conceived for Fanny Trevanion. During the absence of the family from London (and they stayed some time longer than had been expected), I had leisure, however, to recall my father's touching history, and the moral it had so obviously preached to me; and I formed so many good resolutions, that it was with an untrembling hand that I welcomed Miss Trevanion at last to London, and with a firm heart that I avoided, as much as possible, the fatal charm of her society. The slow convalescence of my uncle gave me a just excuse to discontinue our rides. What time Trevanion spared me, it was natural that I should spend with my family. I went to no balls nor parties. I even absented myself from Trevanion's periodical dinners.

Miss Trevanion at first rallied me on my seclusion, with her usual lively malice. But I continued worthily to complete my martyrdom. I took care that no reproachful look at the gaiety that wrung my soul should betray my secret. Then Fanny seemed either hurt or disdainful, and avoided altogether entering her father's study; all at once she changed her tactics, and was seized with a strange desire for knowledge, which brought her into the room to look for a book, or ask a question, ten times a day. I was proof to all. But, to speak truth, I was profoundly wretched. Looking back now, I am dismayed at the remembrance of my own sufferings; my health became seriously affected; I dreaded alike the trial of the day and the anguish of the night. My only distractions were in my visits to Vivian, and my escape to the dear circle of home. And that home was my safeguard and preservative in that crisis of my life; its atmosphere of unpretending honour and serene virtue strengthened all my resolutions; it braced me for my struggles against the strongest passion which youth admits, and counteracted the evil vapours of that air in which Vivian's envenomed spirit breathed and moved. Without the influence of such a home, if I had succeeded in the conduct that probity enjoined towards those in whose house I was a trusted guest, I do not think I could have resisted the contagion of that malign and morbid bitterness against fate and the world, which love, thwarted by fortune, is too inclined of itself to conceive, and in the expression of which Vivian was not

without the eloquence which belongs to earnestness, whether in truth or falsehood. But, somehow or other, I never left the little room that contained the grand suffering in the face of the veteran soldier, whose lip, often quivering with anguish, was never heard to murmur; and the tranquil wisdom which had succeeded my father's early trials (trials like my own), and the loving smile on my mother's tender face, and the innocent childhood of Blanche (by which name the Elf had familiarised herself to us), whom I already loved as a sister,—without feeling that those four walls contained enough to sweeten the world, had it been filled to its capacious brim with gall and hyssop.

Trevanion had been more than satisfied with Vivian's performance—he had been struck with it. For though the corrections in the mere phraseology had been very limited, they went beyond verbal amendments—they suggested such words as improved the thoughts; and, besides that notable correction of an arithmetical error, which Trevanion's mind was formed to over-appreciate, one or two brief annotations on the margin were boldly hazarded, prompting some stronger link in a chain of reasoning, or indicating the necessity for some further evidence in the assertion of a statement. And all this from the mere natural and naked logic of an acute mind, unaided by the smallest knowledge of the subject treated of! Trevanion threw quite enough work into Vivian's hands, and at a remuneration sufficiently liberal to realise my promise of an independence. And

more than once he asked me to introduce to him my friend. But this I continued to elude—heaven knows, not from jealousy, but simply because I feared that Vivian's manner and way of talk would singularly displease one who detested presumption, and understood no eccentricities but his own.

Still, Vivian, whose industry was of a strong wing, but only for short flights, had not enough to employ more than a few hours of his day, and I dreaded lest he should, from very idleness, fall back into old habits, and re-seek old friendships. His cynical candour allowed that both were sufficiently disreputable to justify grave apprehensions of such a result; accordingly, I contrived to find leisure in my evenings to lessen his *ennui*, by accompanying him in rambles through the gas-lit streets, or occasionally, for an hour or so, to one of the theatres.

Vivian's first care, on finding himself rich enough, had been bestowed on his person; and those two faculties of observation and imitation which minds so ready always eminently possess, had enabled him to achieve that graceful neatness of costume peculiar to the English gentleman. For the first few days of his metamorphosis, traces indeed of a constitutional love of show, or vulgar companionship, were noticeable; but one by one they disappeared. First went a gaudy neckcloth, with collars turned down; then a pair of spurs vanished; and lastly, a diabolical instrument that he called a cane—but which, by means of a running bullet,

could serve as a bludgeon at one end, and concealed a dagger in the other—subsided into the ordinary walking-stick adapted to our peaceable metropolis. A similar change, though in a less degree, gradually took place in his manner and his conversation. He grew less abrupt in the one, and more calm, perhaps more cheerful, in the other. It was evident that he was not insensible to the elevated pleasure of providing for himself by praiseworthy exertion—of feeling for the first time that his intellect was of use to him, *creditably*. A new world, though still dim—seen through mist and fog—began to dawn upon him.

Such is the vanity of us poor mortals, that my interest in Vivian was probably increased, and my aversion to much in him materially softened, by observing that I had gained a sort of ascendancy over his savage nature. When we had first met by the roadside, and afterwards conversed in the churchyard, the ascendancy was certainly not on my side. But I now came from a larger sphere of society than that in which he had yet moved. I had seen and listened to the first men in England. What had then dazzled me only, now moved my pity. On the other hand, his active mind could not but observe the change in me ; and, whether from envy or a better feeling, he was willing to learn from me how to eclipse me, and resume his earlier superiority—not to be superior chafed him. Thus he listened to me with docility when I pointed out the books which connected themselves with the various subjects incidental to the miscellaneous matters on which he was employed.

Though he had less of the literary turn of mind than any one equally clever I had ever met, and had read little, considering the quantity of thought he had acquired, and the show he made of the few works with which he had voluntarily made himself familiar, he yet resolutely sate himself down to study; and though it was clearly against the grain, I augured the more favourably from tokens of a determination to do what was at the present irksome for a purpose in the future. Yet, whether I should have approved the purpose had I thoroughly understood it, is another question! There were abysses, both in his past life and in his character, which I could not penetrate. There was in him both a reckless frankness and a vigilant reserve: his frankness was apparent in his talk on all matters immediately before us; in the utter absence of all effort to make himself seem better than he was. His reserve was equally shown in the ingenious evasion of every species of confidence that could admit me into such secrets of his life as he chose to conceal: where he had been born, reared, and educated; how he came to be thrown on his own resources; how he had contrived, how he had subsisted, were all matters on which he had seemed to take an oath to Harpocrates, the god of silence. And yet he was full of anecdotes of what he had seen, of strange companions whom he never named, but with whom he had been thrown. And, to do him justice, I remarked that, though his precocious experience seemed to have been gathered from the holes and corners, the sewers and drains of life, and though he seemed wholly without

dislike to dishonesty, and to regard virtue or vice with as serene an indifference as some grand poet who views them both merely as ministrants to his art, yet he never betrayed any positive breach of honesty in himself. He could laugh over the story of some ingenious fraud that he had witnessed, and seem insensible to its turpitude; but he spoke of it in the tone of an approving witness, not of an actual accomplice. As we grew more intimate, he felt gradually, however, that *pudor*, or instinctive shame, which the contact with minds habituated to the distinctions between wrong and right unconsciously produces, and such stories ceased. He never but once mentioned his family, and that was in the following odd and abrupt manner:—

"Ah!" cried he one day, stopping suddenly before a print-shop, "how that reminds me of my dear, dear mother."

"Which?" said I eagerly, puzzled between an engraving of Raffaelle's "Madonna," and another of "The Brigand's Wife."

Vivian did not satisfy my curiosity, but drew me on in spite of my reluctance.

"You loved your mother, then?" said I, after a pause.

"Yes, as a whelp may a tigress."

"That's a strange comparison."

"Or a bull-dog may the prize-fighter, his master! Do you like that better?"

"Not much; is it a comparison your mother would like?"

"Like?—she is dead!" said he rather falteringly.

I pressed his arm closer to mine.

"I understand you," said he, with his cynic repellant smile. "But you do wrong to feel for my loss. I feel for it; but no one who cares for me should sympathise with my grief."

"Why?"

"Because my mother was not what the world would call a good woman. I did not love her the less for that. And now let us change the subject."

"Nay; since you have said so much, Vivian, let me coax you to say on. Is not your father living?"

"Is not the Monument standing?"

"I suppose so; what of that?"

"Why, it matters very little to either of us; and my question answers yours!"

I could not get on after this, and I never did get on a step farther. I must own that if Vivian did not impart his confidence liberally, neither did he seek confidence inquisitively from me. He listened with interest if I spoke of Trevanion (for I told him frankly of my connection with that personage, though you may be sure that I said nothing of Fanny), and of the brilliant world that my residence with one so distinguished opened to me. But if ever, in the fulness of my heart, I began to speak of my parents, of my home, he evinced either so impertinent an *ennui*, or assumed so chilling a sneer, that I usually hurried away from him, as well as the subject, in indignant disgust. Once especially, when I asked him to let me introduce him to my father —a point on which I was really anxious, for I thought

it impossible but that the devil within him would be softened by that contact—he said, with his low, scornful laugh—

"My dear Caxton, when I was a child, I was so bored with 'Telemachus,' that, in order to endure it, I turned it into travesty."

"Well?"

"Are you not afraid that the same wicked disposition might make a caricature of your Ulysses?"

I did not see Mr Vivian for three days after that speech; and I should not have seen him then, only we met by accident, under the Colonnade of the Opera-House. Vivian was leaning against one of the columns, and watching the long procession which swept to the only temple in vogue that Art has retained in the English Babel. Coaches and chariots, blazoned with arms and coronets—cabriolets (the brougham had not then replaced them) of sober hue, but exquisite appointment, with gigantic horses and pigmy "tigers," dashed on, and rolled off before him. Fair women and gay dresses, stars and ribbons—the rank and the beauty of the patrician world—passed him by. And I could not resist the compassion with which this lonely, friendless, eager, discontented spirit inspired me—gazing on that gorgeous existence in which it fancied itself formed to shine, with the ardour of desire and the despair of exclusion. By one glimpse of that dark countenance, I read what was passing within the yet darker heart. The emotion might not be amiable, nor the thoughts wise, yet were they unnatural? I had experienced

something of them—not at the sight of gay-dressed people, of wealth and idleness, pleasure and fashion; but when, at the doors of Parliament, men who have won noble names, and whose word had weight on the destinies of glorious England, brushed heedlessly by to their grand arena; or when, amidst the holiday crowd of ignoble pomp, I had heard the murmur of fame buzz and gather round some lordly labourer in art or letters: that contrast between glory so near, and yet so far, and one's own obscurity, of course I had felt it—who has not? Alas! many a youth not fated to be a Themistocles, will yet feel that the trophies of a Miltiades will not suffer him to sleep! So I went up to Vivian and laid my hand on his shoulder.

"Ah!" said he, more gently than usual, "I am glad to see you, and to apologise—I offended you the other day. But you would not get very gracious answers from souls in purgatory if you talked to them of the happiness of heaven. Never speak to me about homes and fathers! Enough! I see you forgive me. Why are you not going to the opera? *You* can?"

"And you too, if you so please. A ticket is shamefully dear, to be sure; still, if you are fond of music, it is a luxury you can afford."

"Oh, you flatter me if you fancy the prudence of saving withholds me! I did go the other night, but I shall not go again. Music!—when you go to the opera, is it for the music?"

"Only partially, I own: the lights, the scene, the pageant, attract me quite as much. But I do not think

the opera a very profitable pleasure for either of us. For rich idle people, I daresay, it may be as innocent an amusement as any other, but I find it a sad enervator."

"And I just the reverse—a horrible stimulant! Caxton, do you know that, ungracious as it will sound to you, I am growing impatient of this 'honourable independence!' What does it lead to?—board, clothes, and lodging,—can it ever bring me anything more?"

"At first, Vivian, you limited your aspirations to kid gloves and a cabriolet: it has brought the kid gloves already; by-and-by it will bring the cabriolet!"

"Our wishes grow by what they feed on. You live in the great world—you can have excitement if you please it—I want excitement, I want the world, I want room for my mind, man! Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly—and sympathise with you, my poor Vivian; but it will all come. Patience, as I preached to you while dawn rose so comfortless over the streets of London. You are not losing time; fill your mind; read, study, fit yourself for ambition. Why wish to fly till you have got your wings? Live in books now: after all, they are splendid palaces, and open to us all, rich and poor."

"Books, books!—ah! you are the son of a bookman. It is not by books that men get on in the world, and enjoy life in the meanwhile."

"I don't know that; but, my good fellow, you want

to do both—get on in the world as fast as labour can, and enjoy life as pleasantly as indolence may. You want to live like the butterfly, and yet have all the honey of the bee; and, what is the very deuce of the whole, even as the butterfly, you ask every flower to grow up in a moment; and, as a bee, the whole hive must be stored in a quarter of an hour! Patience, patience, patience."

Vivian sighed a fierce sigh. "I suppose," said he, after an unquiet pause, "that the vagrant and the outlaw are strong in me, for I long to run back to my old existence, which was all action, and therefore allowed no thought."

While he thus said, we had wandered round the Colonnade, and were in that narrow passage in which is situated the more private entrance to the opera: close by the doors of that entrance, two or three young men were lounging. As Vivian ceased, the voice of one of these loungers came laughingly to our ears.

"Oh!" it said, apparently in answer to some question, "I have a much quicker way to fortune than that; I mean to marry an heiress!"

Vivian started, and looked at the speaker. He was a very good-looking fellow. Vivian continued to look at him, and deliberately, from head to foot; he then turned away with a satisfied and thoughtful smile.

"Certainly," said I, gravely (construing the smile), "you are right there; you are even better-looking than that heiress-hunter!"

Vivian coloured; but before he could answer, one

of the loungers, as the group recovered from the gay laugh which their companion's easy coxcombry had excited, said,—

"Then, by the way, if you want an heiress, here comes one of the greatest in England; but instead of being a younger son, with three good lives between you and an Irish peerage, one ought to be an earl at least to aspire to Fanny Trevanion!"

The name thrilled through me—I felt myself tremble; and, looking up, I saw Lady Ellinor and Miss Trevanion, as they hurried from their carriage towards the entrance of the opera. They both recognised me, and Fanny cried,—

"You here! How fortunate! You must see us into the box, even if you run away the moment after."

"But I am not dressed for the opera," said I, embarrassed.

"And why not?" asked Miss Trevanion; then, dropping her voice, she added, "Why do you desert us so wilfully?"—and, leaning her hand on my arm, I was drawn irresistibly into the lobby. The young loungers at the door made way for us, and eyed me, no doubt, with envy.

"Nay!" said I, affecting to laugh, as I saw Miss Trevanion waited for my reply. "You forget how little time I have for such amusements now—and my uncle——"

"Oh, but mamma and I have been to see your uncle to-day, and he is nearly well—is he not, mamma? I cannot tell you how I like and admire him. He is

just what I fancy a Douglas of the old day. But mamma is impatient. Well you must dine with us to-morrow—promise !—not *adieu* but *au revoir*," and Fanny glided to her mother's arm. Lady Ellinor, always kind and courteous to me, had good-naturedly lingered till this dialogue, or rather monologue, was over.

On returning to the passage, I found Vivian walking to and fro ; he had lighted his cigar, and was smoking energetically.

"So this great heiress," said he, smiling, "who, as far as I could see—under her hood—seems no less fair than rich, is the daughter, I presume, of the Mr Trevanion, whose effusions you so kindly submit to me. He is very rich, then ? You never said so, yet I ought to have known it: but you see I know nothing of your *beau monde*—not even that Miss Trevanion is one of the greatest heiresses in England."

"Yes, Mr Trevanion is rich," said I, repressing a sigh—"very rich."

"And you are his secretary ! My dear friend, you may well offer me patience, for a large stock of yours will, I hope, be superfluous to you."

"I don't understand you."

"Yet you heard that young gentleman, as well as myself ; and you are in the same house as the heiress."

"Vivian !"

"Well, what have I said so monstrous ?"

"Pooh ! since you refer to that young gentleman, you heard, too, what his companion told him,—'one ought to be an Earl, at least, to aspire to Fanny Trevanion !'"

"Tut! as well say that one ought to be a *millionaire* to aspire to a million!—yet I believe those who make millions generally begin with pence."

"That belief should be a comfort and encouragement to you, Vivian. And now, good-night,—I have much to do."

"Good-night, then," said Vivian, and we parted.

I made my way to Mr Trevanion's house, and to the study. There was a formidable arrear of business waiting for me, and I sate down to it at first resolutely; but by degrees I found my thoughts wandering from the eternal blue-books, and the pen slipped from my hand, in the midst of an extract from a Report on Sierra Leone. My pulse beat loud and quick; I was in that state of nervous fever which only emotion can occasion. The sweet voice of Fanny rang in my ears; her eyes, as I had last met them, unusually gentle—almost beseeching—gazed upon me wherever I turned: and then, as in mockery, I heard again those words,—"One ought to be an earl, at least, to aspire to"—Oh! did I aspire? Was I vain fool so frantic?—household traitor so consummate? No, no! Then what did I under the same roof?—why stay to imbibe this sweet poison, that was corroding the very springs of my life? At that self-question, which, had I been but a year or two older, I should have asked long before, a mortal terror seized me; the blood rushed from my heart, and left me cold—icy cold. To leave the house—leave Fanny!—never again to see those eyes—never to hear that voice! better die of the sweet poison than of the desolate exile! I rose—I

opened the windows—I walked to and fro the room : I could decide nothing—think of nothing; all my mind was in an uproar. With a violent effort at self-mastery, I approached the table again. I resolved to force myself to my task, if it were only to re-collect my faculties, and enable them to bear my own torture. I turned over the books impatiently, when, lo ! buried amongst them, what met my eye ?—archly, yet reproachfully—the face of Fanny herself ! Her miniature was there. It had been, I knew, taken a few days before by a young artist whom Trevanion patronised. I suppose he had carried it into his study to examine it, and so left it there carelessly. The painter had seized her peculiar expression, her ineffable smile —so charming, so malicious ; even her favourite posture—the small head turned over the rounded Hebe-like shoulder—the eye glancing up from under the hair. I know not what change in my madness came over me ; but I sank on my knees, and, kissing the miniature again and again, burst into tears. Such tears ! I did not hear the door open—I did not see the shadow steal over the floor : a light hand rested on my shoulder, trembling as it rested—I started. Fanny herself was bending over me !

"What is the matter?" she asked, tenderly. "What has happened?—your uncle—your family—all well? Why are you weeping?"

I could not answer ; but I kept my hands clasped over the miniature, that she might not see what they contained.

"Will you not answer? Am I not your friend?—almost your sister? Come, shall I call mamma?"

"Yes—yes; go—go."

"No, I will not go yet. What have you there?—what are you hiding?"

And innocently, and sister-like, those hands took mine; and so—and so—the picture became visible! There was a dead silence. I looked up through my tears. Fanny had recoiled some steps, and her cheek was very flushed, her eyes downcast. I felt as if I had committed a crime—as if dishonour clung to me; and yet I repressed—yes, thank Heaven! I repressed the cry that swelled from my heart, and rushed to my lips —"Pity me, for I love you!" I repressed it, and only a groan escaped me—the wail of my lost happiness! Then, rising, I laid the miniature on the table, and said, in a voice that I believe was firm—

"Miss Trevanion, you *have* been as kind as a sister to me, and therefore I was bidding a brother's farewell to your likeness; it *is* so like you—this!"

"Farewell!" echoed Fanny, still not looking up.

"Farewell—*sister!* There, I have boldly said the word; for—for"—I hurried to the door, and, there turning, added, with what I meant to be a smile—"for they say at home that I—I am not well; too much for me this; you know, mothers will be foolish; and—and—I am to speak to your father to-morrow; and—good night—God bless you, Miss Trevanion!"

PART NINTH.

CHAPTER I.

And my father pushed aside his books.

O young reader, whoever thou art,—or reader, at least, who hast been young,—canst thou not remember some time when, with thy wild troubles and sorrows as yet borne in secret, thou hast come back from that hard, stern world which opens on thee when thou puttest thy foot out of the threshold of home—come back to the four quiet walls, wherein thine elders sit in peace—and seen, with a sort of sad amaze, how calm and undisturbed all is there? That generation which has gone before thee in the path of the passions—the generation of thy parents (not so many years, perchance, remote from thine own)—how immovably far off, in its still repose, it seems from thy turbulent youth! It has in it a stillness as of a classic age, antique as the statues of the Greeks. That tranquil monotony of routine into which those lives that preceded thee have merged—the occupations that they have found suf-

ficing for their happiness, by the fireside—in the arm-chair and corner appropriated to each—how strangely they contrast thine own feverish excitement! And they make room for thee, and bid thee welcome, and then resettle to their hushed pursuits, as if nothing had happened! Nothing had happened! while in thy heart, perhaps, the whole world seems to have shot from its axis, all the elements to be at war! And you sit down, crushed by that quiet happiness which you can share no more, and smile mechanically, and look into the fire; and, ten to one, you say nothing till the time comes for bed, and you take up your candle, and creep miserably to your lonely room.

Now, if in a stage-coach in the depth of winter, when three passengers are warm and snug, a fourth, all besnowed and frozen, descends from the outside and takes place amongst them, straightway all the three passengers shift their places, uneasily pull up their cloak collars, re-arrange their "comforters," feel indignantly a sensible loss of caloric—the intruder has at least made a sensation. But if you had all the snows of the Grampians in your heart, you might enter unnoticed; take care not to tread on the toes of your opposite neighbour, and not a soul is disturbed, not a "comforter" stirs an inch! I had not slept a wink, I had not even laid down all that night—the night in which I had said farewell to Fanny Trevanion —and the next morning, when the sun rose, I wandered out—where, I know not. I have a dim recollection of long, grey, solitary streets—of the river that

seemed flowing in dull sullen silence, away, far away, into some invisible eternity—trees and turf, and the gay voices of children. I must have gone from one end of the great Babel to the other: but my memory only became clear and distinct when I knocked, somewhere before noon, at the door of my father's house, and, passing heavily up the stairs, came into the drawing-room, which was the rendezvous of the little family; for, since we had been in London, my father had ceased to have his study apart, and contented himself with what he called "a corner"—a corner wide enough to contain two tables and a dumb waiter, with chairs *à discrétion* all littered with books. On the opposite side of this capacious corner sat my uncle, now nearly convalescent, and he was jotting down, in his stiff military hand, certain figures in a little red account-book—for you know already that my uncle Roland was, in his expenses, the most methodical of men.

My father's face was more benign than usual, for before him lay a proof—the first proof of his first work—his one work—the Great Book! Yes! it had positively found a press. And the first proof of your first work—ask any author what *that* is! My mother was out with the faithful Mrs Primmins, shopping or marketing, no doubt; so, while the brothers were thus engaged, it was natural that my entrance should not make as much noise as if it had been a bomb, or a singer, or a clap of thunder, or the last "great novel of the season,"

or anything else that made a noise in those days. For what makes a noise now? Now, when the most astonishing thing of all is our easy familiarity with things astounding—when we say, listlessly, "Another revolution at Paris," or "By the by, there is the deuce to do at Vienna!"—when De Joinville is catching fish in the ponds at Claremont, and you hardly turn back to look at Metternich on the pier at Brighton!

My uncle nodded and growled indistinctly; my father—

"Put aside his books; you have told us that already."

Sir, you are very much mistaken; it was not then that he put aside his books, for he was not then engaged in them—he was reading his proof. And he smiled, and pointed to it (the proof I mean) pathetically, and with a kind of humour, as much as to say—"what can you expect, Pisistratus?—my new baby in short clothes—or long primer, which is all the same thing!"

I took a chair between the two, and looked first at one, then at the other—heaven forgive me!—I felt a rebellious ungrateful spite against both. The bitterness of my soul must have been deep indeed, to have overflowed in that direction, but it did. The grief of youth is an abominable egotist, and that is the truth. I got up from the chair, and walked towards the window; it was open, and outside the window was Mrs Primmins' canary, in its cage. London air had agreed with it, and it was singing lustily. Now, when the canary saw me standing opposite to its cage, and regarding it seriously, and, I have no doubt, with a very sombre aspect, the

creature stopped short, and hung its head on one side, looking at me obliquely and suspiciously. Finding that I did it no harm, it began to hazard a few broken notes, timidly and interrogatively, as it were, pausing between each; and at length, as I made no reply, it evidently thought it had solved the doubt, and ascertained that I was more to be pitied than feared—for it stole gradually into so soft and silvery a strain that, I verily believe, it did it on purpose to comfort me!—me, its old friend, whom it had unjustly suspected. Never did any music touch me so home as did that long plaintive cadence. And when the bird ceased, it perched itself close to the bars of the cage, and looked at me steadily with its bright intelligent eyes. I felt mine water, and I turned back and stood in the centre of the room, irresolute what to do, where to go. My father had done with the proof, and was deep in his folios. Roland had clasped his red account-book, restored it to his pocket, wiped his pen carefully, and now watched me from under his great beetle-brows. Suddenly he rose, and, stamping on the hearth with his cork-leg, exclaimed, "Look up from those cursed books, brother Austin! What is there in your son's face? Construe *that*, if you can!"

CHAPTER II.

And my father pushed aside his books, and rose hastily. He took off his spectacles, and rubbed them mechanically, but he said nothing; and my uncle, staring at him for a moment, in surprise at his silence, burst out—

"Oh! I see; he has been getting into some scrape, and you are angry. Fie! young blood will have its way, Austin, it will. I don't blame that—it is only when—come here, Sisty. Zounds! man, come here."

My father gently brushed off the Captain's hand, and, advancing towards me, opened his arms. The next moment I was sobbing on his breast.

"But what is the matter?" cried Captain Roland—"will nobody say what is the matter? Money, I suppose—money, you confounded extravagant young dog. Luckily you have got an uncle who has more than he knows what to do with. How much? Fifty?—a hundred?—two hundred? How can I write the cheque, if you'll not speak."

"Hush, brother! it is no money you can give that will set this right. My poor boy! Have I guessed truly? Did I guess truly the other evening, when——"

"Yes, sir, yes! I have been so wretched. But I am better now—I can tell you all."

My uncle moved slowly towards the door: his fine sense of delicacy made him think that even he was out of place in the confidence between son and father.

"No, uncle," I said, holding out my hand to him, "stay; you too can advise me—strengthen me. I have kept my honour yet—help me to keep it still."

At the sound of the word honour, Captain Roland stood mute, and raised his head quickly.

So I told all—incoherently enough at first, but clearly and manfully as I went on. Now I know that it is not the custom of lovers to confide in fathers and uncles. Judging by those mirrors of life, plays and novels, they choose better;—valets and chambermaids, and friends whom they have picked up in the street, as I had picked up poor Francis Vivian—to these they make clean breasts of their troubles. But fathers and uncles—to them they are close, impregnable, "buttoned to the chin." The Caxtons were an eccentric family, and never did anything like other people. When I had ended, I lifted up my eyes, and said, pleadingly, "Now, tell me, is there no hope—none?"

"Why should there be none?" cried Captain Roland, hastily—"The De Caxtons are as good a family as the Trevanions; and as for yourself, all I will say is, that the young lady might choose worse for her own happiness."

I wrung my uncle's hand, and turned to my father in anxious fear, for I knew that, in spite of his secluded

habits, few men ever formed a sounder judgment on worldly matters, when he was fairly drawn to look at them. A thing wonderful is that plain wisdom which scholars and poets often have for others, though they rarely deign to use it for themselves. And how on earth do they get at it? I looked at my father, and the vague hope Roland had excited fell as I looked.

"Brother," said he, slowly, and shaking his head, "the world, which gives codes and laws to those who live in it, does not care much for a pedigree, unless it goes with a title-deed to estates."

"Trevanion was not richer than Pisistratus when he married Lady Ellinor," said my uncle.

"True; but Lady Ellinor was not then an heiress; and her father viewed these matters as no other peer in England perhaps would. As for Trevanion himself, I dare say he has no prejudices about station, but he is strong in common sense. He values himself on being a practical man. It would be folly to talk to him of love, and the affections of youth. He would see in the son of Austin Caxton, living on the interest of some fifteen or sixteen thousand pounds, such a match for his daughter as no prudent man in his position could approve. And as for Lady Ellinor"—

"She owes us much, Austin!" exclaimed Roland, his face darkening.

"Lady Ellinor is now what, if we had known her better, she promised always to be—the ambitious, brilliant, scheming woman of the world. Is it not so,—Pisistratus?"

I said nothing—I felt too much.

"And does the girl like you?—but I think it is clear she does!" exclaimed Roland. "Fate, fate; it has been a fatal family to us! Zounds! Austin, it was your fault. Why did you let him go there?"

"My son is now a man—at least in heart, if not in years—can man be shut from danger and trial? They found me in the old parsonage, brother!" said my father, mildly.

My uncle walked, or rather stumped, three times up and down the room; and he then stopped short, folded his arms, and came to a decision—

"If the girl likes you, your duty is doubly clear—you can't take advantage of it. You have done right to leave the house, for the temptation might be too strong."

"But what excuse shall I make to Mr Trevanion?" said I, feebly—"what story can I invent? So careless as he is while he trusts, so penetrating if he once suspects, he will see through all my subterfuges, and—and——"

"It is as plain as a pike-staff," said my uncle, abruptly—"and there need be no subterfuge in the matter. 'I must leave you, Mr Trevanion,' 'Why,' says he. 'Don't ask me.' He insists. 'Well then, sir, if you must know, I love your daughter. I have nothing, she is a great heiress. You will not approve of that love, and therefore I leave you!' That is the course that becomes an English gentleman. Eh, Austin?"

"You are never wrong when your instincts speak, Roland," said my father. "Can you say this, Pisistratus, or shall I say it for you?"

"Let him say it himself," said Roland; "and let him judge himself of the answer. He is young, he is clever, he may make a figure in the world. Trevanion *may* answer, 'Win the lady after you have won the laurel, like the knights of old.' At all events you will hear the worst."

"I will go," said I, firmly; and I took my hat and left the room. As I was passing the landing-place, a light step stole down the upper flight of stairs, and a little hand seized my own. I turned quickly, and met the full, dark, seriously sweet eyes of my cousin Blanche.

"Don't go away yet, Sisty," said she coaxingly. "I have been waiting for you, for I heard your voice, and did not like to come in and disturb you."

"And why did you wait for me, my little Blanche?"

"Why! only to see you. But your eyes are red. Oh, cousin!" and, before I was aware of her childish impulse, she had sprung to my neck and kissed me. Now Blanche was not like most children, and was very sparing of her caresses. So it was out of the deeps of a kind heart that that kiss came. I returned it without a word; and, putting her down gently, descended the stairs, and was in the streets. But I had not got far before I heard my father's voice; and he came up, and hooking his arm into mine, said, "Are there not two of us that suffer?—let us be together!" I pressed

his arm, and we walked on in silence. But when we were near Trevanion's house, I said, hesitatingly, "Would it not be better, sir, that I went in alone? If there is to be an explanation between Mr Trevanion and myself, would it not seem as if your presence implied either a request to him that would lower us both, or a doubt of me that—"

"You will go in alone, of course: I will wait for you—"

"Not in the streets—oh, no! father," cried I, touched inexpressibly. For all this was so unlike my father's habits, that I felt remorse to have so communicated my young griefs to the calm dignity of his serene life.

"My son, you do not know how I love you. I have only known it myself lately. Look you, I am living in you now, my first-born; not in my other son—the Great Book: I must have my way. Go in; that is the door, is it not?"

I pressed my father's hand, and I felt then, that while that hand could reply to mine, even the loss of Fanny Trevanion could not leave the world a blank. How much we have before us in life, while we retain our parents! How much to strive and to hope for! What a motive in the conquest of our sorrow—that they may not sorrow with us!

CHAPTER III.

I ENTERED Trevanion's study. It was an hour in which he was rarely at home, but I had not thought of that; and I saw without surprise that, contrary to his custom, he was in his arm-chair, reading one of his favourite classic authors, instead of being in some committee-room of the House of Commons.

"A pretty fellow you are," said he, looking up, "to leave me all the morning, without rhyme or reason! And my committee is postponed—chairman ill; people who get ill should not go into the House of Commons. So here I am, looking into Propertius: Parr is right; not so elegant a writer as Tibullus. But what the deuce are you about?—why don't you sit down? Humph! you look grave—you have something to say—say it!"

And, putting down Propertius, the acute sharp face of Trevanion instantly became earnest and attentive.

"My dear Mr Trevanion," said I, with as much steadiness as I could assume, "you have been most kind to me; and out of my own family there is no man I love and respect more."

TREVANION.—"Humph! What's all this? (In an under tone)—Am I going to be taken in?"

PISISTRATUS.—"Do not think me ungrateful, then, when I say I come to resign my office—to leave the house where I have been so happy."

TREVANION.—"Leave the house! Pooh! I have overtasked you. I will be more merciful in future. You must forgive a political economist; it is the fault of my sect to look upon men as machines."

PISISTRATUS (smiling faintly).—"No, indeed; that is not it! I have nothing to complain of; nothing I could wish altered—could I stay."

TREVANION (examining me thoughtfully).—"And does your father approve of your leaving me thus?"

PISISTRATUS.—"Yes—fully."

TREVANION (musing a moment).—"I see, he would send you to the University, make you a book-worm like himself: pooh! that will not do—you will never become wholly a man of books—it is not in you. Young man, though I may seem careless, I read characters, when I please it, pretty quickly. You do wrong to leave me; you are made for the great world—I can open to you a high career. I wish to do so! Lady Ellinor wishes it—nay, insists on it—for your father's sake as well as yours. I never ask a favour from ministers, and I never will. But (here Trevanion rose suddenly, and, with an erect mien and a quick gesture of his arm, he added,)—but a minister can dispose as he pleases of his patronage. Look you, it is a secret yet, and I trust to your honour. But, before the year is out, I must be in the cabinet. Stay with me, I guarantee your fortunes—three months ago I would not have said

that. By-and-by I will open Parliament for you—you are not of age yet—work till then. And now sit down and write my letters—a sad arrear!"

"My dear, dear Mr Trevanion!" said I, so affected that I could scarcely speak, and seizing his hand, which I pressed between both mine—"I dare not thank you—I cannot! But you don't know my heart—it is not ambition. No! if I could but stay here on the same terms for ever—*here*"—looking ruefully on that spot where Fanny had stood the night before. "But it is impossible!—if you knew all, you would be the first to bid me go!"

"You are in debt," said the man of the world, coldly. "Bad, very bad—still"—

"No, sir; no! worse"—

"Hardly possible to be worse, young man—hardly! But, just as you will; you leave me, and will not say why. Good-by. Why do you linger? Shake hands, and go!"

"I cannot leave you thus: I—I—sir, the truth shall out. I am rash and mad enough not to see Miss Trevanion without forgetting that I am poor, and—"

"Ha!" interrupted Trevanion, softly, and growing pale, "this is a misfortune, indeed! And I, who talked of reading characters! Truly, truly, we would-be practical men are fools—fools! And you have made love to my daughter!"

"Sir? Mr Trevanion!—no—never, never so base! In your house, trusted by you,—how could you think it? I dared, it may be, to love—at all events, to feel

that I could not be insensible to a temptation too strong for me. But to say it to your heiress—to ask love in return—I would as soon have broken open your desk! Frankly I tell you my folly: it is a folly, not a disgrace."

Trevanion came up to me abruptly, as I leant against the bookcase, and, grasping my hand with a cordial kindness, said, "Pardon me! You have behaved as your father's son should—I envy him such a son! Now, listen to me—I cannot give you my daughter—"

"Believe me, sir, I never—"

"Tut, listen! I cannot give you my daughter. I say nothing of inequality—all gentlemen are equal; and if not, any impertinent affectation of superiority, in such a case, would come ill from one who owes his own fortune to his wife! But, as it is, I have a stake in the world, won not by fortune only, but the labour of a life, the suppression of half my nature—the drudging, squaring, taming down all that made the glory and joy of my youth—to be that hard matter-of-fact thing which the English world expect in a *statesman!* This station has gradually opened into its natural result—power! I tell you I shall soon have high office in the administration: I hope to render great services to England—for we English politicians, whatever the mob and the press say of us, are not selfish place-hunters. I refused office, as high as I look for now, ten years ago. We believe in our opinions, and we hail the power that may carry them into effect. In this cabinet I shall have enemies. Oh, don't think we leave jealousy behind us, at the doors of Downing Street! I shall be one of a minority.

I know well what must happen: like all men in power, I must strengthen myself by other heads and hands than my own. My daughter shall bring to me the alliance of that house in England which is most necessary to me. My life falls to the ground, like a child's pyramid of cards, if I waste—I do not say on you, but on men of ten times your fortune (whatever that be), the means of strength which are at my disposal in the hand of Fanny Trevanion. To this end I have looked; but to this end her mother has schemed—for these household matters are within a man's hopes, but belong to a woman's policy. So much for us. But to you, my dear, and frank, and high-souled young friend—to you, if I were not Fanny's father—if I were your nearest relation, and Fanny could be had for the asking, with all her princely dower (for it is princely),—to you I should say, fly from a load upon the heart, on the genius, the energy, the pride, and the spirit, which not one man in ten thousand can bear; fly from the curse of owing everything to a wife!—it is a reversal of all natural position; it is a blow to all the manhood within us. You know not what it is; I do! My wife's fortune came not till after marriage—so far, so well; it saved my reputation from the charge of fortune-hunting. But, I tell you fairly, that if it had never come at all, I should be a prouder, and a greater, and a happier man than I have ever been, or ever can be, with all its advantages; it has been a millstone round my neck. And yet Ellinor has never breathed a word that could wound my pride. Would her daughter be as forbearing? Much as I love

Fanny, I doubt if she has the great heart of her mother. You look incredulous;—naturally. Oh, you think I shall sacrifice my child's happiness to a politician's ambition. Folly of youth! Fanny would be wretched with you. She might not think so now; she would five years hence! Fanny will make an admirable duchess, countess, great lady; but wife to a man who owes all to her!—no, no, don't dream it! I shall not sacrifice her happiness, depend on it. I speak plainly, as man to man—man of the world to a man just entering it—but still man to man! What say you?"

"I will think over all you tell me. I know that you are speaking to me most generously—as a father would. Now let me go, and may God keep you and yours!"

"Go—I return your blessing—go! I don't insult you now with offers of service; but, remember, you have a right to command them—in all ways, in all times. Stop!—take this comfort away with you—a sorry comfort now, a great one hereafter. In a position that might have moved anger, scorn, pity, you have made a barren-hearted man honour and admire you. You, a boy, have made me, with my grey hairs, think better of the whole world; tell your father that."

I closed the door, and stole out softly—softly. But when I got into the hall, Fanny suddenly opened the door of the breakfast parlour, and seemed, by her look, her gesture, to invite me in. Her face was very pale, and there were traces of tears on the heavy lids.

I stood still a moment, and my heart beat violently.

I then muttered something inarticulately, and, bowing low, hastened to the door.

I thought, but my ears might deceive me, that I heard my name pronounced; but fortunately the tall porter started from his newspaper and his leathern chair, and the entrance stood open. I joined my father.

"It is all over," said I, with a resolute smile. "And now, my dear father, I feel how grateful I should be for all that your lessons—your life—have taught me; for, believe me, I am not unhappy."

CHAPTER IV.

We came back to my father's house, and on the stairs we met my mother, whom Roland's grave looks, and her Austin's strange absence, had alarmed. My father quietly led the way to a little room, which my mother had appropriated to Blanche and herself: and then, placing my hand in that which had helped his own steps from the stony path down the quiet vales of life, he said to me,—"Nature gives you here the soother;" and so saying, he left the room.

And it was true, O my mother! that in thy simple loving breast nature did place the deep wells of comfort! We come to men for philosophy—to women for consolation. And the thousand weaknesses and regrets —the sharp sands of the minutiæ that make up *sorrow* —all these, which I could have betrayed to no *man*— not even to him, the dearest and tenderest of all men —I showed without shame to thee! And thy tears, that fell on my cheek, had the balm of Araby; and my heart, at length, lay lulled and soothed under thy moist gentle eyes.

I made an effort, and joined the little circle at

dinner; and I felt grateful that no violent attempt was made to raise my spirits—nothing but affection, more subdued, and soft, and tranquil. Even little Blanche, as if by the intuition of sympathy, ceased her babble, and seemed to hush her footstep as she crept to my side. But after dinner, when we had reassembled in the drawing-room, and the lights shone bright, and the curtains were let down—and only the quick roll of some passing wheels reminded us that there was a world without—my father began to talk. He had laid aside all his work; the younger but less perishable child was forgotten,—and my father began to talk.

"It is," said he, musingly, "a well-known thing, that particular drugs or herbs suit the body according to its particular diseases. When we are ill, we don't open our medicine-chest at random, and take out any powder or phial that comes to hand. The skilful doctor is he who adjusts the dose to the malady."

"Of that there can be no doubt," quoth Captain Roland. "I remember a notable instance of the justice of what you say. When I was in Spain, both my horse and I fell ill at the same time; a dose was sent for each; and, by some infernal mistake, I swallowed the horse's physic, and the horse, poor thing, swallowed mine!"

"And what was the result?" asked my father.

"The horse died!" answered Roland, mournfully—"a valuable beast—bright bay, with a star!"

"And you?"

"Why, the doctor said it ought to have killed me;

but it took a great deal more than a paltry bottle of physic to kill a man in my regiment."

"Nevertheless, we arrive at the same conclusion," pursued my father,—"I with my theory, you with your experience,—that the physic we take must not be chosen haphazard; and that a mistake in the bottle may kill a horse. But when we come to the medicine for the mind, how little do we think of the golden rule which common sense applies to the body!"

"Anan," said the Captain, "what medicine is there for the mind? Shakespeare has said something on that subject, which, if I recollect right, implies that there is no ministering to a mind diseased."

"I think not, brother; he only said physic (meaning boluses and black draughts) would not do it. And Shakespeare was the last man to find fault with his own art; for, verily, he has been a great physician to the mind."

"Ah! I take you now, brother,—books again! So you think that, when a man breaks his heart, or loses his fortune, or his daughter—(Blanche, child, come here)—that you have only to clap a plaster of print on the sore place, and all is well. I wish you would find me such a cure."

"Will you try it?"

"If it is not Greek," said my uncle.

CHAPTER V.

MY FATHER'S CROTCHET ON THE HYGEIENIC CHEMISTRY OF BOOKS.

"If," said my father—and here his hand was deep in his waistcoat—"if we accept the authority of Diodorus, as to the inscription on the great Egyptian library—and I don't see why Diodorus should not be as near the mark as any one else?" added my father, interrogatively, turning round.

My mother thought herself the person addressed, and nodded her gracious assent to the authority of Diodorus. His opinion thus fortified, my father continued,—"If, I say, we accept the authority of Diodorus, the inscription on the Egyptian library was—'The Medicine of the Mind.' Now, that phrase has become notoriously trite and hackneyed, and people repeat vaguely that books are the medicine of the mind. Yes; but to apply the medicine is the thing!"

"So you have told us at least twice before, brother," quoth the Captain, bluffly. "And what Diodorus has to do with it, I know no more than the man of the moon."

"I shall never get on at this rate," said my father, in a tone between reproach and entreaty.

"Be good children, Roland and Blanche both," said my mother, stopping from her work, and holding up her needle threateningly—and indeed inflicting a slight puncture upon the Captain's shoulder.

"Rem *acu* tetigisti, my dear," said my father, borrowing Cicero's pun on the occasion.* "And now we shall go upon velvet. I say, then, that books, taken indiscriminately, are no cure to the diseases and afflictions of the mind. There is a world of science necessary in the taking them. I have known some people in great sorrow fly to a novel, or the last light book in fashion. One might as well take a rose-draught for the plague! Light reading does not do when the heart is really heavy. I am told that Goethe, when he lost his son, took to study a science that was new to him. Ah! Goethe was a physician who knew what he was about. In a great grief like that, you cannot tickle and divert the mind; you must wrench it away, abstract, absorb—bury it in an abyss, hurry it into a labyrinth. Therefore, for the irremediable sorrows of middle life and old age, I recommend a strict chronic course of science and hard reasoning—Counter-irritation. Bring the brain to act upon the heart! If science is too much against the grain (for we have not all got mathematical heads), something in the reach of the humblest understanding, but sufficiently searching

* Cicero's joke on a senator who was the son of a tailor—"Thou hast touched the thing sharply" (or with a needle—*acu*).

to the highest—a new language—Greek, Arabic, Scandinavian, Chinese, or Welsh! For the loss of fortune, the dose should be applied less directly to the understanding.—I would administer something elegant and cordial. For as the heart is crushed and lacerated by a loss in the affections, so it is rather the head that aches and suffers by the loss of money. Here we find the higher class of poets a very valuable remedy. For observe that poets of the grander and more comprehensive kind of genius have in them two separate men, quite distinct from each other—the imaginative man, and the practical, circumstantial man; and it is the happy mixture of these that suits diseases of the mind, half imaginative and half practical. There is Homer, now lost with the gods, now at home with the homeliest, the very 'poet of circumstance,' as Gray has finely called him; and yet with imagination enough to seduce and coax the dullest into forgetting, for a while, that little spot on his desk which his banker's book can cover. There is Virgil, far below him, indeed—

> 'Virgil the wise,
> Whose verse walks highest, but not flies,'

as Cowley expresses it. But Virgil still has genius enough to be two men—to lead you into the fields, not only to listen to the pastoral reed, and to hear the bees hum, but to note how you can make the most of the glebe and the vineyard. There is Horace, charming man of the world, who will condole with you feelingly on the loss of your fortune, and by no means undervalue the good things of this life; but who will yet

show you that a man may be happy with a *vile modicum*, or *parva rura*. There is Shakespeare, who, above all poets, is the mysterious dual of hard sense and empyreal fancy—and a great many more, whom I need not name; but who, if you take to them gently and quietly, will not, like your mere philosopher, your unreasonable stoic, tell you that you have lost nothing; but who will insensibly steal you out of this world, with its losses and crosses, and slip you into another world, before you know where you are!—a world where you are just as welcome, though you carry no more earth of your lost acres with you than covers the sole of your shoe. Then, for hypochondria and satiety, what is better than a brisk alterative course of travels—especially early, out-of-the-way, marvellous, legendary travels! How they freshen up the spirits! How they take you out of the humdrum yawning state you are in. See, with Herodotus, young Greece spring up into life; or note with him how already the wondrous old Orient world is crumbling into giant decay; or go with Carpini and Rubruquis to Tartary, meet 'the carts of Zagathai laden with houses, and think that a great city is travelling towards you.'* Gaze on that vast wild empire of the Tartar, where the descendants of Jenghis 'multiply and disperse over the immense waste desert, which is as boundless as the ocean.' Sail with the early northern discoverers, and penetrate to the heart of winter, among sea-serpents and bears, and tusked morses, with the faces of men. Then, what

* RUBRUQUIS, sect. xii.

think you of Columbus, and the stern soul of Cortes, and the kingdom of Mexico, and the strange gold city of the Peruvians, with that audacious brute Pizarro? and the Polynesians, just for all the world like the ancient Britons? and the American Indians, and the South-Sea Islanders? how petulant, and young, and adventurous, and frisky your hypochondriac must get upon a regimen like that! Then, for that vice of the mind which I call sectarianism—not in the religious sense of the word, but little, narrow prejudices, that make you hate your next-door neighbour, because he has his eggs roasted when you have yours boiled; and gossiping and prying into people's affairs, and backbiting, and thinking heaven and earth are coming together, if some broom touch a cobweb that you have let grow over the window-sill of your brains—what like a large and generous, mildly aperient (I beg your pardon, my dear) course of history! How it clears away all the fumes of the head!—better than the hellebore with which the old leeches of the middle ages purged the cerebellum. There, amidst all that great whirl and *sturmbad* (storm-bath), as the Germans say, of kingdoms and empires, and races and ages, how your mind enlarges beyond that little feverish animosity to John Styles; or that unfortunate prepossession of yours, that all the world is interested in your grievances against Tom Stokes and his wife!

"I can only touch, you see, on a few ingredients in this magnificent pharmacy—its resources are boundless, but require the nicest discretion. I remember to have

cured a disconsolate widower, who obstinately refused every other medicament, by a strict course of geology. I dipped him deep into gneiss and mica-schist. Amidst the first strata, I suffered the watery action to expend itself upon cooling crystallised masses; and, by the time I had got him into the tertiary period, amongst the transition chalks of Maestricht, and the conchiferous marls of Gosau, he was ready for a new wife. Kitty, my dear! it is no laughing matter. I made no less notable a cure of a young scholar at Cambridge, who was meant for the church, when he suddenly caught a cold fit of freethinking, with great shiverings, from wading out of his depth in Spinosa. None of the divines, whom I first tried, did him the least good in that state; so I turned over a new leaf, and doctored him gently upon the chapters of faith in Abraham Tucker's book (you should read it, Sisty); then I threw in strong doses of Fichte; after that I put him on the Scotch metaphysicians, with plunge-baths into certain German transcendentalists; and having convinced him that faith is not an unphilosophical state of mind, and that he might believe without compromising his understanding—for he was mightily conceited on that score—I threw in my divines, which he was now fit to digest; and his theological constitution, since then, has become so robust, that he has eaten up two livings and a deanery! In fact, I have a plan for a library that, instead of heading its compartments, 'Philology, Natural Science, Poetry,' &c., one shall head them according to the diseases for which they are severally

good, bodily and mental—up from a dire calamity, or the pangs of the gout, down to a fit of the spleen or a slight catarrh; for which last your light reading comes in with a whey-posset and barley-water. But," continued my father, more gravely, "when some one sorrow, that is yet reparable, gets hold of your mind like a monomania—when you think, because heaven has denied you this or that, on which you had set your heart, that all your life must be a blank—oh! then diet yourself well on biography—the biography of good and great men. See how little a space one sorrow really makes in life. See scarce a page, perhaps, given to some grief similar to your own; and how triumphantly the life sails on beyond it! You thought the wing was broken!—Tut—tut—it was but a bruised feather! See what life leaves behind it when all is done!—a summary of positive facts far out of the region of sorrow and suffering, linking themselves with the being of the world. Yes, biography is the medicine here! Roland, you said you would try my prescription—here it is,"—and my father took up a book, and reached it to the Captain.

My uncle looked over it—*Life of the Reverend Robert Hall.* "Brother, he was a Dissenter, and, thank heaven! I am a church-and-state man to the back-bone!"

"Robert Hall was a brave man, and a true soldier under the Great Commander," said my father, artfully.

The Captain mechanically carried his forefinger to

his forehead in military fashion, and saluted the book respectfully.

"I have another copy for you, Pisistratus—that is mine which I have lent Roland. This, which I bought for you to-day, you will keep."

"Thank you, sir," said I, listlessly, not seeing what great good the *Life of Robert Hall* could do me, or why the same medicine should suit the old weather-beaten uncle, and the nephew yet in his teens.

"I have said nothing," resumed my father, slightly bowing his broad temples, "of the Book of Books, for that is the *lignum vitæ*, the carnal medicine for all. These are but the subsidiaries: for, as you may remember, my dear Kitty, that I have said before—we can never keep the system quite right unless we place just in the centre of the great ganglionic system, whence the nerves carry its influence gently and smoothly through the whole frame—THE SAFFRON BAG!"

CHAPTER VI.

After breakfast the next morning, I took my hat to go out, when my father, looking at me, and seeing by my countenance that I had not slept, said gently—

"My dear Pisistratus, you have not tried my medicine yet."

"What medicine, sir?"

"Robert Hall."

"No, indeed, not yet," said I, smiling.

"Do so, my son, before you go out; depend on it you will enjoy your walk more."

I confess that it was with some reluctance I obeyed. I went back to my own room, and sate resolutely down to my task. Are there any of you, my readers, who have not read the *Life of Robert Hall?* If so, in the words of the great Captain Cuttle, "When found, make a note of it." Never mind what your theological opinion is—Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Baptist, Pædobaptist, Independent, Quaker, Unitarian, Philosopher, Free-thinker,—send for Robert Hall! Yea, if there exist yet on earth descendants of the arch-heresies, which made such a noise in their day—men who believe with Saturninus that the world was made by seven angels;

or with Basilides, that there are as many heavens as there are days in the year; or with the Nicolaitanes, that men ought to have their wives in common (plenty of that sect still, especially in the Red Republic); or with their successors, the Gnostics, who believed in Jaldaboath; or with the Carpacratians, that the world was made by the devil; or with the Cerinthians, and Ebionites, and Nazarites (which last discovered that the name of Noah's wife was Ouria, and that she set the ark on fire); or with the Valentinians, who taught that there were thirty Æones, ages, or worlds, born out of Profundity (Bathos), male, and Silence, female;. or with the Marcites, Colarbasii and Heracleonites (who still kept up that bother about Æones, Mr Profundity, and Mrs Silence); or with the Ophites, who are said to have worshipped the serpent; or the Cainites, who ingeniously found out a reason for honouring Judas, because he foresaw what good would come to men by betraying our Saviour; or with the Sethites, who made Seth a part of the divine substance; or with the Archonticks, Ascothyptæ, Cerdonians, Marcionites, the disciples of Apelles, and Severus (the last was a tee-totaller, and said wine was begot by Satan!) or of Tatian, who thought all the descendants of Adam were irretrievably damned except themselves (some of those Tatiani are certainly extant!) or the Cataphrygians, who were also called Tascodragitæ, because they thrust their forefingers up their nostrils to show their devotion; or the Pepuzians, Quintilians, and Artotyrites; or—but no matter. If I go through all the follies of men in

search of the truth, I shall never get to the end of my chapter, or back to Robert Hall: whatever, then, thou art, orthodox or heterodox, send for the *Life of Robert Hall*. It is the life of a man that it does good to manhood itself to contemplate.

I had finished the biography, which is not long, and was musing over it, when I heard the Captain's cork-leg upon the stairs. I opened the door for him, and he entered, book in hand, as I, also, book in hand, stood ready to receive him.

"Well, sir," said Roland, seating himself, "has the prescription done you any good?"

"Yes, uncle—great."

"And me, too. By Jupiter, Sisty, that same Hall was a fine fellow! I wonder if the medicine has gone through the same channels in both? Tell me first how it has affected you."

"*Imprimis*, then, my dear uncle, I fancy that a book like this must do good to all who live in the world in the ordinary manner, by admitting us into a circle of life of which I suspect we think but little. Here is a man connecting himself directly with a heavenly purpose, and cultivating considerable faculties to that one end; seeking to accomplish his soul as far as he can, that he may do most good on earth, and take a higher existence up to heaven; a man intent upon a sublime and spiritual duty: in short, living as it were in it, and so filled with the consciousness of immortality, and so strong in the link between God and man, that, without any affected stoicism, without being insensible to pain

—rather, perhaps, from a nervous temperament, acutely feeling it—he yet has a happiness wholly independent of it. It is impossible not to be thrilled with an admiration that elevates while it awes you, in reading that solemn 'Dedication of himself to God.' This offering of 'soul and body, time, health, reputation, talents,' to the divine and invisible Principle of Good, calls us suddenly to contemplate the selfishness of our own views and hopes, and awakens us from the egotism that exacts all and resigns nothing.

"But this book has mostly struck upon the chord in my own heart, in that characteristic which my father indicated as belonging to all biography. Here is a life of remarkable *fulness*, great study, great thought, and great action; and yet," said I, colouring, "how small a place those feelings, which have tyrannised over me, and made all else seem blank and void, hold in that life. It is not as if the man were a cold and hard ascetic; it is easy to see in him, not only remarkable tenderness and warm affections, but strong self-will, and the passion of all vigorous natures. Yes; I understand better now what existence in a true man should be."

"All that is very well said," quoth the Captain, "but it did not strike me. What I have seen in this book is courage. Here is a poor creature rolling on the carpet with agony; from childhood to death tortured by a mysterious incurable malady—a malady that is described as 'an internal apparatus of torture;' and who does by his heroism, more than *bear* it—he puts it out of power to affect him; and though (here is the

passage) 'his appointment by day and by night was incessant pain, yet high enjoyment was, notwithstanding, the law of his existence.' Robert Hall reads me a lesson—me, an old soldier, who thought myself above taking lessons—in courage, at least. And, as I came to that passage when, in the sharp paroxysms before death, he says, 'I have not complained, have I, sir?—and I won't complain!'—when I came to that passage I started up, and cried, 'Roland de Caxton, thou hast been a coward! and, an thou hadst had thy deserts, thou hadst been cashiered, broken, and drummed out of the regiment long ago!'"

"After all, then, my father was not so wrong—he placed his guns right, and fired a good shot."

"He must have been from 6° to 9° above the crest of the parapet," said my uncle, thoughtfully—"which, I take it, is the best elevation, both for shot and shells, in enfilading a work."

"What say you, then, Captain?—up with our knapsacks, and on with the march!"

"Right about—face!" cried my uncle, as erect as a column.

"No looking back, if we can help it."

"Full in the front of the enemy. 'Up, guards, and at 'em!'"

"'England expects every man to do his duty!'"

"Cypress or laurel!" cried my uncle, waving the book over his head.

CHAPTER VII.

I WENT out—and to see Francis Vivian ; for, on leaving Mr Trevanion, I was not without anxiety for my new friend's future provision. But Vivian was from home, and I strolled from his lodgings into the suburbs on the other side of the river, and began to meditate seriously on the best course now to pursue. In quitting my present occupations, I resigned prospects far more brilliant, and fortunes far more rapid, than I could ever hope to realise in any other entrance into life. But I felt the necessity, if I desired to keep steadfast to that more healthful frame of mind I had obtained, of some manly and continuous labour—some earnest employment. My thoughts flew back to the university ; and the quiet of its cloisters, which, until I had been blinded by the glare of the London world, and grief had somewhat dulled the edge of my quick desires and hopes, had seemed to me cheerless and unaltering—took an inviting aspect. It presented what I needed most—a new scene, a new arena, a partial return into boyhood ; repose for passions prematurely raised ; activity for the reasoning powers in fresh directions.

I had not lost my time in London: I had kept up, if not studies purely classical, at least the habits of application; I had sharpened my general comprehension, and augmented my resources. Accordingly, when I returned home, I resolved to speak to my father. But I found he had forestalled me; and, on entering, my mother drew me up-stairs into her room, with a smile kindled by my smile, and told me that she and her Austin had been thinking that it was best that I should leave London as soon as possible; that my father found he could now dispense with the library of the Museum for some months; that the time for which they had taken their lodgings would be up in a few days; that the summer was far advanced, town odious, the country beautiful—in a word, we were to go home. There I could prepare myself for Cambridge, till the long vacation was over; and, my mother added hesitatingly, and with a prefatory caution to spare my health, that my father, whose income could ill afford the requisite allowance to me, counted on my soon lightening his burden, by getting a scholarship. I felt how much provident kindness there was in all this—even in that hint of a scholarship, which was meant to rouse my faculties, and spur me, by affectionate incentives, to a new ambition. I was not less delighted than grateful.

"But poor Roland," said I, "and little Blanche—will they come with us?"

"I fear not," said my mother, "for Roland is anxious to get back to his tower; and in a day or two he will be well enough to move."

"Do you not think, my dear mother, that, somehow or other, this lost son of his had something to do with Roland's illness—that the illness was as much mental as physical?"

"I have no doubt of it, Sisty. What a sad, bad heart that young man must have!"

"My uncle seems to have abandoned all hope of finding him in London; otherwise, ill as he has been, I am sure we could not have kept him at home. So he goes back to the old tower. Poor man, he must be dull enough there! We must contrive to pay him a visit. Does Blanche ever speak of her brother?"

"No; for it seems they were not brought up much together—at all events, she does not remember him. How lovely she is! Her mother must surely have been very handsome."

"She is a pretty child, certainly, though in a strange style of beauty—such immense eyes!—and affectionate, and loves Roland as she ought."

And here the conversation dropped.

Our plans being thus decided, it was necessary that I should lose no time in seeing Vivian, and making some arrangement for the future. His manner had lost so much of its abruptness, that I thought I could venture to recommend him personally to Trevanion; and I knew, after what had passed, that Trevanion would make a point to oblige me. I resolved to consult my father about it. As yet, I had either never found, or never made the opportunity to talk to my father on the subject, he had been so occupied; and, if he had proposed

to see my new friend, what answer could I have made, in the teeth of Vivian's cynic objections? However, as we were now going away, that last consideration ceased to be of importance; and, for the first, the student had not yet entirely settled back to his books. I therefore watched the time when my father walked down to the Museum, and, slipping my arm in his, I told him, briefly and rapidly, as we went along, how I had formed this strange acquaintance, and how I was now situated. The story did not interest my father quite so much as I expected, and he did not understand all the complexities of Vivian's character—how could he?—for he answered briefly, "I should think that, for a young man, apparently without a sixpence, and whose education seems so imperfect, any resource in Trevanion must be most temporary and uncertain. Speak to your Uncle Jack—he can find him some place, I have no doubt—perhaps a readership in a printer's office, or a reporter's place on some journal, if he is fit for it. But if you want to steady him, let it be something regular."

Therewith my father dismissed the matter, and vanished through the gates of the Museum. Readership to a printer—reportership on a journal—for a young gentleman with the high notions and arrogant vanity of Francis Vivian—his ambition already soaring far beyond kid gloves and a cabriolet! The idea was hopeless; and, perplexed and doubtful, I took my way to Vivian's lodgings. I found him at home, and unemployed, standing by his window, with folded arms, and in a

state of such reverie that he was not aware of my entrance till I had touched him on the shoulder.

"Ha!" said he then, with one of his short, quick, impatient sighs, "I thought you had given me up, and forgotten me—but you look pale and harassed. I could almost think you had grown thinner within the last few days."

"Oh! never mind me, Vivian: I have come to speak of yourself. I have left Trevanion; it is settled that I should go to the university—and we all quit town in a few days."

"In a few days!—all!—who are all?"

"My family—father, mother, uncle, cousin, and myself. But, my dear fellow, now let us think seriously what is best to be done for you. I can present you to Trevanion."

"Ha!"

"But Trevanion is a hard, though an excellent man; and, moreover, as he is always changing the subjects that engross him, in a month or so he may have nothing to give you. You said you would work—will you consent not to complain if the work cannot be done in kid gloves? Young men who have risen high in the world have begun, it is well known, as reporters to the press. It is a situation of respectability, and in request, and not easy to obtain, I fancy; but still—"

Vivian interrupted me hastily—

"Thank you a thousand times! but what you say confirms a resolution I had taken before you came. I shall make it up with my family, and return home."

"Oh! I am so really glad. How wise in you!"

Vivian turned away his head abruptly—

"Your pictures of family life and domestic peace, you see," he said, "seduced me more than you thought. When do you leave town?"

"Why, I believe, early next week."

"So soon," said Vivian, thoughtfully. "Well, perhaps I may ask you yet to introduce me to Mr Trevanion; for—who knows?—my family and I may fall out again. But I will consider. I think I have heard you say that this Trevanion is a very old friend of your father's or uncle's?"

"He, or rather Lady Ellinor, is an old friend of both."

"And therefore would listen to your recommendations of me. But perhaps I may not need them. So you have left—left of your own accord—a situation that seemed more enjoyable, I should think, than rooms in a college;—left—why did you leave?"

And Vivian fixed his bright eyes full and piercingly on mine.

"It was only for a time, for a trial, that I was there," said I, evasively; "out at nurse, as it were, till the Alma Mater opened her arms—*alma* indeed she ought to be to my father's son."

Vivian looked unsatisfied with my explanation, but did not question me farther. He himself was the first to turn the conversation, and he did this with more affectionate cordiality than was common to him. He inquired into our general plans, into the probabilities of our return to town, and drew from me a description

of our rural Tusculum. He was quiet and subdued; and once or twice I thought there was a moisture in those luminous eyes. We parted with more of the unreserve and fondness of youthful friendship—at least on my part, and seemingly on his—than had yet endeared our singular intimacy; for the cement of cordial attachment had been wanting to an intercourse in which one party refused all confidence, and the other mingled distrust and fear with keen interest and compassionate admiration.

That evening, before lights were brought in, my father, turning to me, abruptly asked if I had seen my friend, and what he was about to do.

"He thinks of returning to his family," said I.

Roland, who had seemed dozing, winced uneasily.

"Who returns to his family?" asked the Captain.

"Why, you must know," said my father, "that Sisty has fished up a friend of whom he can give no account that would satisfy a policeman, and whose fortunes he thinks himself under the necessity of protecting. You are very lucky that he has not picked your pockets, Sisty; but I dare say he has? What's his name?"

"Vivian," said I,—"Francis Vivian."

"A good name, and a Cornish," said my father. "Some derive it from the Romans—Vivianus; others from a Celtic word, which means"—

"Vivian!" interrupted Roland—"Vivian!—I wonder if it be the son of Colonel Vivian?"

"He is certainly a gentleman's son," said I; "but he never told me what his family and connections were."

"Vivian," repeated my uncle—"poor Colonel Vivian! So the young man is going to his father. I have no doubt it is the same. Ah!"—

"What do you know of Colonel Vivian or his son?" said I. "Pray tell me; I am so interested in this young man."

"I know nothing of either, except by gossip," said my uncle moodily. "I did hear that Colonel Vivian, an excellent officer and honourable man, had been in—in—(Roland's voice faltered)—in great grief about his son, whom, a mere boy, he had prevented from some improper marriage, and who had run away and left him—it was supposed for America. The story affected me at the time," added my uncle, trying to speak calmly.

We were all silent, for we felt why Roland was so disturbed, and why Colonel Vivian's grief should have touched him home. Similarity in affliction makes us brothers even to the unknown.

"You say he is going home to his family—I am heartily glad of it!" said the envying old soldier, gallantly.

The lights came in then, and two minutes after, Uncle Roland and I were nestled close to each other, side by side; and I was reading over his shoulder, and his finger was silently resting on that passage that had so struck him—"I have not complained—have I, sir? —and I won't complain!"

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

BINDING

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Lytton, Edward George Earle
Lytton Bulwer-Lytton
The Caxtons

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